

Pashinyan Said to Seek Meeting With Erdogan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday, September 19, that Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has offered to meet with him for talks on improving Turkish-Armenian relations.

Erdogan appeared to make such conditional talks on Armenia agreeing to open a transport corridor that would connect Azerbaijan to its Nakhichevan exclave.

“It is bewildering that on the one hand Pashinyan is saying that the Armenian side is not discussing that [corridor] issue and on the other expressing a desire to meet with me,” he said. “If he wants to meet with Tayyip Erdogan then clear steps will have to be taken.”

Erdogan said the offer was communicated to him by Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili. The latter had met with Pashinyan in Tbilisi on September 8.

Pashinyan did not explicitly deny making such an offer when he reacted to Erdogan’s remarks through his spokeswoman, Mane Gevorgyan, on Monday.

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Armenia Takes Azerbaijan to International Court of Justice

YEREVAN (OC Media) — Armenia has filed a case against Azerbaijan at the International Court of Justice for the alleged racial discrimination of ethnic Armenians.

The UN court, based in the Hague, issued a statement on Thursday, September 16, confirming the application against Azerbaijan for alleged violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

According to Armenia’s application, “for decades, Azerbaijan has subjected Armenians to racial discrimination. As a result of this State-sponsored policy of Armenian

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Looking to Himnadram for Aid in the Aftermath of War

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEW YORK – Executive Director of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund (“Himnadram”) Haykak Arshamyan briefly visited the United States at the end of August on a working visit. He provided information about the activities of the fund during and after the war to the *Mirror-Spectator* at the tail end of this trip. While the Himnadram helped the Armenian community in Lebanon last year after the August explosion in Beirut’s port, engaged in a campaign raising some \$800,000 to help Armenia deal with Covid-19, and had various other projects, Arshamyan primarily discussed the fund’s work concerning the 2020 Artsakh war and its aftermath.

The Fund

The Hayastan All Armenian-Fund is an independent, humanitarian nonprofit organization, Arshamyan said, with Armenian state representatives participating as members of its board of trustees along with representatives of diasporan political forces and church denominations. He said, “The Himnadram is only subject to its board’s decisions, and its mission statement.”

The board discusses its annual general goals, but in addition, during the course of each year, see AID, page 4

(COURTESY HIMNADRAM.ORG)



Bionic upper limb prostheses at the Zinvori Tun donated through the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund

New water supply system being installed in the Paravakar of Tavush

(COURTESY HIMNADRAM.ORG)

Cleveland Armenian Festival a Hit

By Harry Kezelian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

CLEVELAND — Cleveland’s annual Armenian Festival was hosted by St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church in Richmond Heights, Ohio on September 17 and 18. The festival, in its 20th year, brought together Armenians and non-Armenians from the local area and throughout the state of Ohio for food and music in the spacious grassy field between St. Gregory of Narek’s church and cultural hall.

The Cleveland community is small but very energetic. The local Armenians come from all parts of the world, all backgrounds, and all walks of life. Young people from Los Angeles or Boston who arrived recently to attend school rub elbows with grandparents who immigrated from the Middle East 40 years ago; American-born grandchildren of the Malatiatsi Genocide survivors who founded the community a hundred years ago work together with relative newcomers from Yerevan and Baku; and everyone seems to get along.

The small size of the community and the friendly Midwestern values have enabled various groups of immigrants to bridge their divides. “We don’t care about those divisions — we are welcoming,” says Parish Council chairwoman Mona Karoghlanian, who organized the Festival along with the rest of her committee.

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Pioneering Scholar
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History, Culture Dies

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VANCOUVER, BC

Celeste Nazeli
Snowber: Writer,
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NEWS from ARMENIA

Serzh Sargsyan Pays Tribute to Martyrs on Independence Anniversary

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Armenia's Independence, early on September 20, a wreath was laid on behalf of Third President Serzh Sargsyan in Yerablur Military Pantheon at the memorial to Armenian heroes who sacrificed their lives for Homeland's freedom and independence. Later in the day Sargsyan called at the grave of his late comrade-in-arms, Artsakh Hero, former President of the Yerkrapah Volunteer Union, Lieutenant General Manvel Grigoryan. The Third President of Armenia paid floral tribute to Manvel Grigoryan who went all the way through the glorious path of freedom fight.

Soldiers and Volunteers Honored with Posthumous Awards on Independence Day

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — According to a decree signed by Armenian President Armen Sarkisyan, a group of fallen servicemen and volunteers were honored with posthumous awards for their contribution to the defense and security of the homeland, as well as bravery and dedication during the hostilities on the country's Independence Day celebrated on September 21. Follower Artur Galstyan was posthumously awarded the 2nd degree Medal "For Services to the Motherland." Soldiers (privates) Vachagan Hakobyan, Sargis Davtyan, Manvel Khardalyan, volunteers Artur Hovhannisyanyan, Artak Hajoyan, Nerses Movsesyan and Garik Muradyan were given the "Medal for Combat Service" posthumously.

Ambassador Tracy Again Stresses Need for Negotiation between Armenia and Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The situation on a key interstate road in Armenia's Syunik province makes the need for negotiations and discussions between Armenia and Azerbaijan more vivid, US Ambassador to Yerevan Lynne Tracy said in an interview with the Public Television on September 20. Tracy's remarks came amid months-long tensions on the border with Azerbaijan and the latter's incursion into the sovereign territory of Armenia since mid-May. In recent weeks, Azerbaijan has at least once blocked the road — which in the aftermath of the Second Karabakh War now passes through Azerbaijan-controlled areas — as well as started collecting money from Iranian truck drivers transporting goods to Armenia. Citing the capabilities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group co-chairmanship, Tracy said the US is also open to other platforms if it can play a role in resolving the situation. According to her, the demarcation and delimitation of the border is especially important.

COAF and AMAA Partner to Revamp Dairy Production in Lori

YEREVAN — Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) signed a four-year Memorandum of Understanding with the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) on September 17 to upgrade dairy production in six communities of the Lori region. By improving the pasture and livestock feed production across the region, this project will enhance the quality of raw milk and establish a demand for high-quality dairy products, ultimately impacting regional price dynamics and increasing the revenue of rural milk producers.

The event was held at the COAF SMART Center and attended by representatives from the Strategic Development Agency (SDA) and World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF), Caritas Armenia, AMCOR, as well as mayors of the beneficiary communities.

COAF has integrated Economic Development in its multilayered effort to create the right socio-economic environment for collective progress. As part of its Economic Development program, COAF has earlier launched a project in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This program has resulted in developing a raspberry value chain in the Lori region by providing berry seedlings, establishing a drip irrigation system, and training over 50 households in berry production and cultivation.

Drawing on successes achieved in this project, COAF is eager to replicate this model for Armenia's underdeveloped dairy value chain. In joining forces with the AMAA, COAF will be able to make a sustainable impact on Lori's dairy market by optimizing four existing businesses through innovative and renewable technologies in milk processing. Simultaneously, two new dairy production businesses will be established that will benefit from the enhanced reproductive performance of dairy animals. The improved quality of milk will allow the new businesses to improve livestock production, produce high-quality cheese, and compete in local and international markets.

As part of the project's capacity-build-

ing programs, local farmers will be trained for artificial insemination and cultivation of corn, alfalfa, and sainfoin. Per partners' estimates, more than 70 job opportunities will be created throughout the project.

COAF is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that employs community-led approaches to improve the quality of life in rural Armenia, with a particular focus on children and youth. COAF's core develop-

through cutting-edge education, focused both on innovation and capacity-building. The first COAF SMART Center was inaugurated on May 27, 2018, near the village of Debet, Lori Region, and will be replicated in communities throughout Armenia.

The AMAA was founded on June 7, 1918 in Worcester, Massa. Immediately after the devastating earthquake of 1988 in Armenia, the AMAA worked to relieve



AMAA Deputy Armenia representative Aren Deyirmenjian on the left and COAF's Managing Director Korioun Khatchadourian on the right

ment areas are education, healthcare, social services, and economic development. COAF launched its programs in 2004, starting in one village and expanding to 64 villages in the Armavir, Aragatsotn, Lori, Gegharkunik, Shirak, and Tavush regions, impacting more than 107,000 beneficiaries.

Since 2015, COAF has developed and implemented its signature SMART Initiative. COAF SMART is designed to advance generations of rural Armenians

the pain of those affected by the earthquake by providing food, clothing, medicine, and medical equipment.

In 1991, after the independence of Armenia and following the registration of the AMAA in Armenia, the new headquarters opened in Yerevan. Currently the AMAA operates from dozens of offices in various regions of the Republic of Armenia and Artsakh with more than 475 employees.

Conference Participants Alarmed by Reports of Destruction of Armenian Religious Heritage in Areas under Azerbaijani Control

ECHMIADZIN (Panorama.am) — The conference on International Religious Freedom and Peace, convened at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin in Armenia on September 9-10, brought a special focus to the promotion of freedom of religion and preservation of spiritual, cultural and historical heritage. As the Information Service at the Mother See reported, at the end of the conference the organizing Committee adopted a joint Communiqué.

The document reads:

"We re-affirm the principles of the right to freedom of religion or belief, as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent international and regional human rights treaties. We claim this right, equally, for all people, of any faith or none, and regardless of nation, history or political circumstances — including for those Armenian prisoners of war still illegally held in captivity by Azerbaijan, for whose swift release and repatriation we appeal and pray, and for the people of Artsakh/Nagorno Karabakh whose rights to free and peaceful assembly and association necessarily implicate the sacred character

of human life," read part of the meetings' statement.

"We stress the critical importance of the protection of holy sites, places of worship and religious heritage for the effective realization of religious freedom, and for the promotion and preservation of peaceful relations among nations and communities. Protecting places of worship and safeguarding free access to them is essential for guaranteeing the exercise of religious freedom."

The group's statement added that it endorses the Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites, and in particular the following provisions and stipulations:

- Holy sites shall be preserved for present and future generations, with dignity, integrity and respect for their name and confessional identity. They shall be preserved both as sites of religious significance, and as historical, cultural and ecological legacies of their communities and of humankind. They shall not be desecrated or damaged, nor shall religious communities be forcibly deprived of their holy sites; and

- ...all parties shall promote the preservation of holy sites, acknowledge the sig-

nificance of holy sites of others as places of worship and sites of identity, respect the sensitivities of others with regard to these sites, and stress their spiritual value rather than any strategic, territorial or military significance. The attachment of a group to its holy site shall not be denied.

The statement added deep concern regarding the integrity of Armenian religious and cultural heritage in areas now under Azerbaijani control. "Our concern is greatly amplified by the well-substantiated reports of the systematic erasure of Armenian historical sites of world heritage significance in Djulfa, Nakhichevan, and elsewhere in Azerbaijan," the statement continued.

Therefore, the group called on the government of Azerbaijan to allow immediate and unimpeded international access to the areas of Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as to sites in Nakhichevan and elsewhere in Azerbaijan, for the purpose of independent assessment and monitoring missions.

They also urged UNESCO to make an assessment mission to these areas an urgent priority.



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‘From Armenia 2020 to Armenia 2041’: Outlining Future Armenian Efforts

YEREVAN — On September 19, a discussion titled “From Armenia 2020 to Armenia 2041” took place in Yerevan, during which Noubar Afeyan and Ruben Vardanyan, Co-Initiators of Armenia 2020 and the Future Armenian summarized the programs implemented with their partners in the Armenian world in the last 20 years and outlined their vision for Armenia 2041.

At the beginning of the event, about 700 programs implemented in Armenia and the Armenian world in the last 20 years (from 2000 to 2020) in education, science, technology, humanitarianism, cultural heritage preservation, environment, healthcare, economy, and tourism were presented.

“In the last 20 years, we have been trying to achieve changes by setting 2020 as a goal to build a more attractive, prosperous, stable, and self-sufficient country. I think there is a consensus that we really need to find inspiration and energy to do what we need to do. In my opinion, all Armenians should become Armenians by choice and commit themselves to build the future of Armenia. Let us define the Armenian as something we all strive to be. We need to rebuild this network, and we need to believe in our future for the sake of today’s 5-year-old kids”, said Noubar Afeyan, Co-Initiator of the Future Armenian.

Conversations about the future were based on the “Armenia 2041” report prepared in cooperation with McKinsey & Company global management consulting firm.

“We have registered 6-percent GDP growth in Armenia annually. Unfortunately, this growth is not stable, as it is mostly based on consumer loans and public debt. There has been a productivity improvement, but it is not big enough for us to become an exporting country. In terms of foreign investment, there is also great potential to make improvements. In conclusion, we can be proud of our achievements but, at the same time, there is great potential to move forward,” said Andre Andonian, Managing Partner of McKinsey Korea and Senior Partner at McKinsey Seoul.



Dr. Noubar Afeyan, by video, joins the forum with Dr. Ruben Vardanyan

The McKinsey and Armenia 2041 teams presented the most noteworthy data on the five priority sectors of the economy (agriculture, high-tech, healthcare, education, tourism) and outlined the prospects for the development of each sector.

“Today we live in a unique moment, and it is time to make serious decisions. That is why we initiated the Future Armenian. I think apathy, not being interested in the future, will kill the Armenian people. At the same time, this crisis provides a good opportunity to achieve change. One of our goals is to bring 50,000 families to Armenia who will say that they want to build a new Armenia with Armenians”, said Ruben Vardanyan, Co-Initiator of the Future Armenian.

The event concluded with a question-and-answer session with the participants. The event was attended by members of the Armenian government, ambassadors, representatives of the Diaspora, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, donors, partners, and beneficiaries of various programs.

There were also separate pavilions at the entrance, set up to represent the major projects initiated in the past 20 years: Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, Tourism and Urbanism Foundation (Tatev Revival Program, Dilijan Development Program, Gyumri Development Program), UWC Dilijan College, UWC National Committee of Armenia, and Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology (FAST).

TUMO Announces \$50 Million ‘TUMO Armenia’ Campaign To Extend Its Learning Network Nationwide

YEREVAN — Marking TUMO’s 10 year anniversary and the inauguration of the new TUMO Gyumri building, the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies today announced a five year, \$50 million initiative to make its leading edge educational program available to all teenagers throughout Armenia and Artsakh. With 110 satellite facilities called TUMO Boxes connected to 16 fully equipped TUMO Hubs in regional centers, the program will serve 80 thousand students and reach all young Armenians even in the most remote villages.

A \$10-million seed fund donated by the Yemenidjian family will launch and support hubs in Vanadzor, Kapan and Koghbi, along with TUMO Boxes that feed into these and three existing hubs. To raise the remaining \$40 million, TUMO is kicking off an international fundraising campaign. The Armenian General Benevolent Union and Elie & Elzbieta Akilian have each pledged to match up to \$10 million of funds raised in the first two years of the campaign. With \$10 million in seed funding, a \$20 million fundraising goal, and an additional \$20 million in matching contributions, the deployment initiative is already underway.

The announcement was made during the anniversary celebration of the official opening of the new TUMO center in Gyumri in the presence of government representatives, partners and friends. TUMO founders Sam and Sylva Simonian joined via live video and gave opening remarks.

“Our vision has always been to empower all young Armenians to achieve their full potential,” said Sam Simonian. “And



The TUMO Center in Yerevan

now we are setting out to fulfill that vision throughout Armenia and Artsakh.”

Also attending were Armen Yemenidjian, representing the Yemenidjian family, Vasken Yacoubian and Vera Setrakian on behalf of AGBU, Elie Akilian, on behalf of Elie & Elzbieta Akilian, via video feed, and TUMO CEO Marie Lou Papazian.

“My family is extremely excited and proud to be a part of this vital initiative to arm the next generation of Armenians with the tools necessary to compete in the global technology marketplace, no matter where they live in Armenia,” said Armen Yemenidjian. “We hope this initiative encourages our Armenian brothers and sisters in the diaspora to invest in the future leaders of our

country and economy.”

“AGBU has supported the incredible mission and vision of TUMO since its expansion in Armenia and Artsakh, and this gift will solidify a partnership to benefit Armenian children for generations to come. It is an honor to be able to strengthen the relationship between TUMO, AGBU, and students and their families. I also wanted to thank the other generous donors who will be joining this important campaign,” said Dr. Eric Esrailian on behalf of the AGBU Council of Trustees and Central Board of Directors.

TUMO Center for Creative Technologies is a free-of-charge education platform that puts teenagers in charge of their own learning. The TUMO program is made up

of self-learning activities, workshops and project labs that cover a wide range of focus areas at the intersection of technology and design, including computer programming, animation, game development, music, robotics, 3D modeling, writing, filmmaking, graphic design and more. Over 20 thousand students currently attend TUMO centers in Armenia on a regular basis. In recent years, TUMO centers have also opened in Paris, Moscow, Tirana, Berlin and Beirut, with additional centers expected to open in Lyon, Los Angeles, Lisbon, Milan, Tashkent and Seoul. Licensing revenues from international locations contribute to the long term sustainability of TUMO in Armenia and Artsakh.



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proposals are made from the Himnadram itself, its donors and various government ministries. Arshamyan said that its mechanism is very flexible.

Its board during some years has met to ratify decisions only a few times during the year, but over the last one or two years the trustees have been very active, Arshamyan related, especially during the war. Furthermore, at any time, he is able to consult with any desired trustee for advice. However, the trustees are in general very busy with their own demanding careers, so they are primarily representative in their roles and do not in general carry out programs themselves.

When asked whether the board might be broadened in the future, Arshamyan explained that in 1992, well known representatives of the diaspora and government officials were chosen. If new organizations join the board now, there will be many similar ones that will want to be on it too, and this will create a problem, he said. Furthermore, the larger a board, the slower it will work, Arshamyan said, and it is already large. It should perhaps even be made smaller, he added.

Trip to US

Arshamyan last came to the United States in November of last year. His trip in August to Los Angeles, Washington DC, and New York was not directly for fundraising. Its primary purpose was to understand dispositions and connect with the people involved in the Armenia Fund head-



Haykak Arshamyan (courtesy Haykak Arshamyan)

quartered in Glendale, California, as well as supporters in various parts of the US. Arshamyan observed, “However much you speak with people by means of Zoom or the telephone, it is more fruitful to have meetings in person.”

As executive director of the All-Armenian Fund, he works with fundraising bodies in various countries to explain the current programs and needs in Armenia (and Artsakh). In the past there was an East Coast office of the Armenia Fund which Arshamyan said had become passive. He said it was not possible to preserve it and make it more active. Instead, the Glendale office on the West Coast for now serves the entire United States.

While the office may be reestablished sometime in the future, Arshamyan said, “I think it is possible to find other formats. Perhaps it is possible to have ‘ambassadors’ in different cities who will work with the West Coast Armenian Fund office, and thus find a more flexible method of work. They would be empowered to speak in the name of the Armenian Fund.”

The annual telethon conducted by the Armenia Fund, Arshamyan said, will take place again this fall, but instead of asking for money, it will report on what was accomplished in Armenia and Artsakh over the last year. He said, “Himnadram is not doing fundraising at this moment because we do not need it, and we have a large capital fund to spend.”

Strengthening of border communities in Armenia will be a focus over the next year, which will require large sums because the border of Armenia has now become much longer, Arshamyan said, declaring, “From Tavush to Gegharkunik, Syunik and Vayots Dzor, the border communities have serious need for reinforcement, so that people can live better in their homes and not think about leaving. So, we must tell people that any money collected this year will be used for this purpose.”

Background

The 50-year-old Arshamyan has a doctorate in Armenian history earned in 1996 from Yerevan State University and many years of experience both in government and nonprofit organizations. He worked for Armenia’s Ministry of Education and Science, and then on the staff of the Armenian prime minister, followed by four years at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and finally 3 ½ years as advisor to the Minister of Education and Science, before starting work at a series of nonprofits. The latter include Birthright Armenian (6 years), the Yerevan Press Club (almost 4 years), the Regional Studies Center with Richard Giragosian (a little over 3 years), and Transparency Inter-



The opening ceremony took place at the prosthetics laboratory at Zinvori Tun, where Armenian servicemen presented flowers to their mothers with their first independent steps on April 23, 2021 (courtesy Himnadram.org)

national Anticorruption Center (one year and 8 months).

He jumped back into government as an advisor for Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan after the “Velvet Revolution.” Arshamyan said that he knew Pashinyan prior to the revolution, and many of his friends were involved in political struggle. However, he said, “I myself have been more in civil society, and always worked in that way.” He worked for the defense of human rights from 2004-5 as part of a struggle for democracy in the civic opposition, explaining: “By saying civic, we organized through various nongovernmental organizations and initiatives, various events, even demonstrations and protests, on ecology, urban development and other issues. I was active like many of my coevals in Armenia.”

Arshamyan served on the board of trustees of the Civil Contract Foundation for Return [Kaghakatsiakan Paymanagir Veradardzi Himnadram]. It was established to raise money for the Civil Contract, the future party of Nikol Pashinyan, and, Arshamyan said, many of the trustees were from civil society, which was seen as suitable for supervision of fundraising and finances. When Pashinyan’s formal political party was established, this board no longer had anything left to do, he said.

After Pashinyan was in power with Arshamyan as an adviser, troubles erupted at the Himnadram due to the scandalous actions of its then executive director Ara Vardanyan, accused of embezzlement and misuse of funds. A call was announced for a new director through a competition and Arshamyan said he thought with his background of work with the Armenian diaspora he could help in this position to restore the credibility of the Himnadram. Arshamyan won the competition and was chosen as executive director. He said, “I do not regret accepting this mission.” He thanks his team for its hard work and the donors who placed their confidence again in the Himnadram.

Fundraising and Aid during the War

When asked to respond to criticism voiced in the media that the money collected in unprecedented amounts during the 2020 Artsakh war was spent far too slowly, Arshamyan replied, “During the war, the Himnadram sent millions of dollars of aid on demand. Power generators, and even beds or basic items of aid were needed, and the Himnadram coordinated it all. Several million dollars of aid were sent during the war itself.” He specified that in all, some four million dollars of direct assistance was given plus a great deal of humanitarian items sent from diasporan communities.

The largest expenditure of money during the war was actually the transfer of approximately \$107 million to the Armenian government, a sum which actually constitutes more than half of the \$170 million raised at that period. This act gave rise to much criticism. Arshamyan exclaimed, “I can say that in the months of November and December there was a campaign against the Himnadram organized in various places. Some people were of course upset, and not looking into the details, said as soon as the war ended, why did we give money and then you gave

that money to the government. They did not take into account that it was wartime with military circumstances — unprecedented circumstances — and everyone was told to centralize fundraising with the Himnadram.”

He accepted that some criticism about the Himnadram was justified, declaring: “Some said truly, it would be better to do this instead of that, and we accepted that.” However, the fact that such a large sum of money was transferred to the government led to great attention and even envy, he said. Much criticism came with ulterior motives.

He said there was a political exploitation of the situation, adding: “those artificially created [criticisms] come from several centers which were against the government of Armenia, without understanding that the Himnadram is not a government body. When you harm the Himnadram, you are not harming the government. You are hurting the diaspora, your compatriots.”

Arshamyan pointed out that the board of trustees of the Himnadram had agreed to transfer this money and that the government signed contracts that it be used for humanitarian needs of infrastructure, social assistance, primarily for Artsakh Armenians, and health care. He noted that two members of the Himnadram board, former Armenian president Robert Kocharyan and former Artsakh president Arkady Ghukasyan, did not vote on this decision because they were not in communication with the board.

Kocharyan, a member of the board since 2009, did not participate in any board meeting for over ten years, Arshamyan said. When Arshamyan became executive director, all board members were sent information on voting, but, Arshamyan said, neither Kocharyan nor Ghukasyan responded, so they consequently had no connection with the fund. Therefore, when the request for votes were sent during the war, they did not receive it, but even without them there was a majority vote accepting the decision for the transfer to the government. On this situation, Arshamyan concluded, “There is the technical fault of the Himnadram and the passivity of some of its members of the board.”

He said furthermore that the money transferred to the government deliberately excluded funds raised in the US and Canada, and for the most part was from collections in Armenia and Russia, in order to avoid complications with North American donors.

Arshamyan related, “When the war ended, immediately there were demands for reporting. It was unbelievable. It takes time to do such work, and I cannot imagine a foundation that collects \$100 million and in one month spends \$100 million and can give a report. Time was necessary to do reporting.”

On the other hand, he said, that in general the Himnadram reports on Facebook and its website weekly about the programs it is conducting and what is being spent, so that people can follow in this fashion publicly. The Himnadram was ready to present its annual report for 2020 in April or May of this year, but it wanted the Ministry of Finance of Armenia to give its information on the use of the \$107 million it had received to make the report complete.



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The ministry wanted to wait until all spending ended and all work was finished, so it only submitted its report to the Himnadram in June.

The Himnadram had a special committee created with its own board members, and Arshamyan, which worked on it with auditors and met separately. Arshamyan said, “That report we found is in line with the mission of the Himnadram and in line with the contract we signed with the Ministry of Finance. The purposes that were put into that contract are in line with the reporting.” The audit and reporting required examining hundreds of government decisions to see if they were in accordance with the Him-nadram mission and it was a huge operation, Arshamyan said.

At present, the Finance Ministry report is being examined by the Himnadram’s trustees. After it is accepted, it will be published publicly and the 2020 annual Himnadram report can also be issued. Arshamyan said, “It will be understood then that the clamor that was raised was in vain.”

“There was a long battle which I hope I overcame,” Arshamyan said about the attacks, concluding, “people now are calmer and feel more confident [about the justifiability of the transfer].” He said that President Armen Sarkissian tried to calm the public during this process when he demanded reporting from the Ministry of Finance and declared that if the reporting does not correspond to our goals, the Himnadram can demand the transferred money back.

Post-War Activities

Starting during the war, and continuing to the present, Arshamyan said, there have been some 200 tons of humanitarian aid distributed. The Himnadram finds beneficiaries, transports the aid and distributes it.

After the war, with 60-70,000 Artsakh refugees in Armenia, the Himnadram started to provide them with aid and food, costing millions of dollars. Arshamyan said, “Our staff is very small. Everybody thinks we are a huge organization but we have in all 30 employees, of whom one-half are technical employees. The core staff which does program work is 10-15 people. Therefore, we spoke with various nonprofits in Armenia which work with the Artsakh refugees and distributed everything through them.” For example, he said, AGBU was given \$450,000, which then took care of some tens of thousands, while in Marduni (Gegharkunik province), another nonprofit helped refugees in that region. In Yerevan, various hotels were paid to host refugees from Shushi and Hadrut until they can return to Artsakh. Food is provided daily. In Tsaghkadzor, hundreds of people live in the Golden Palace Hotel from December 2021 until the present, Arshamyan said, with the Himnadram paying for their food too.

The Armenian government of course also provides important aid to refugees, he added.

Despite all the aforementioned activities, when the war ended in early November, there was a delay in spending the bulk of the money collected. Arshamyan explained: “After the war, we and the Artsakh government needed a good amount of time to choose programs. What needs they [Artsakh] had needed to be examined by a session of our council of trustees in order to decide the direction of the plans of the Himnadram for this year. It took two months, together with Artsakh, to shape and crystallize these plans. All these plans were presented at the March 15 meeting of the council of trustees, leading to the Himnadram to adopt a plan for approximately 60 million dollars of expenditures.” This amount was to be spent in Artsakh.

There are several categories of significant programs, which include construction or repair of homes, schools and roads. Important work is conducted in treating those with handicaps due to the war and helping them recover as much as possible. After the initial decisions were taken on programs, many steps had to be taken, including researching lands appropriate for constructing buildings, and architecturally planning the constructions. Then competitions were announced for bids on these projects.

Prostheses

When it became apparent that there would be many people with lost or damaged limbs after the war, the Himnadram immediately negotiated with two large companies producing prostheses, Ottobock in Germany, and Össur, an Icelandic company making bionic limbs. Simultaneously, Arshamyan said, Armenia’s Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs investigated how many people need prostheses for arms or legs. This led to the purchases of material for 100 prostheses for legs, prostheses for hands, and a new laboratory from Ottobock, which the Himnadram donated to



Some of the Ottobock prostheses procured by the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund (courtesy Himnadram.org)

the Soldier’s House Rehabilitation Center (Zinvori Tun), an organization in turn connected to a foundation called Rehabilitation Center of the Defender of the Homeland (Hayreniki Pashtpani Verakangnoghakan Kentron). Arshamyan said that while they expected the numbers to be greater, there were only around 130 people in all needing prostheses, of whom 22 needed hands and the rest feet.

At the end of this August, the Soldier’s House had received prostheses for more than 50 people. A specialist from Holland had been invited and training of the people in Armenia who must prepare the prostheses took place. Three million dollars of work already has been done.

In addition, three centers with equipment for rehabilitation, including the Arabkir Medical Center, the Wigmore Clinic in Yerevan, and the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Center in Stepanakert, Artsakh, will provide free treatment to individuals needing it.

The Himnadram made an agreement with two large centers to provide psychological help for free to Armenian soldiers who participated in the recent war and their family members. By the end of August, over 400 people have used these two centers, for a total of over 3,000 visits.

It also gave \$1,100,000 aid at the end of 2020 to the Insurance Foundation for Servicemen, also known as the 1000+ Himnadram, the stated goal of which according to its website is “insuring and providing compensations to soldiers and families of soldiers who have been injured or deceased when defending the borders of our two motherlands.”

Construction in Artsakh

Arshamyan said that by the end of the year, the Himnadram hopes to have 250-300 apartments ready to give to Artsakh refugees. It also bought furniture and other items for the same number of families. Arshamyan said, “The people moving there have nothing. They had fled their homes. So imagine — we have provided 300 refrigerators, washing machines, gas ovens, furniture, and so forth for each family.”

The Himnadram is building more than 900 apartments and over 100 homes in Artsakh, which in all will provide housing eventually for 1,000 families. It also plans to build another 100 homes in a later stage. The governments of Armenia and Artsakh are cooperating and the Armenian state provides aid. Arshamyan said that homes of wood could be built much more quickly but they would not have a long life and would need to be maintained regularly, so this was not a reliable long-term solution. Instead, the Himnadram decided to construct homes of stone as a permanent solution.

In particular, the refugees from Shushi and Hadrut who lost their homes were all city dwellers, so the Himnadram’s goal is to make apartment buildings in Stepanakert and surroundings for them. The Artsakh government also allotted large plots of land in the Ivanyan community of Askeran Province, not that far



Construction of an apartment building near Tigran Mets Street in Stepanakert (courtesy Himnadram.org)

in a city environment, for approximately 80 houses for families displaced from various villages. These families will also get land for cultivation. An additional 50 houses will be built later in Hovsepavan, next to Ivanyan.

The Artsakh government has its own plans for restoring abandoned homes in more distant villages, costing perhaps ten to fifteen thousand dollars each, which will be cheaper and quicker than building new ones. Perhaps around 300 such homes will be ready by this winter, Arshamyan estimated.

Arshamyan accepted that this will not suffice for thousands of refugees. In all, including efforts of the Artsakh government and others besides the Himnadram, he estimated that by this winter, there will be only be homes or apartments ready for approximately 1,000 families (perhaps thus for 4-5,000 people) in Artsakh.

Arshamyan noted that in addition to housing, the Himnadram is completely renovating two schools of Artsakh, one in Ivanyan and the other in Chldran village.

The Himnadram is also building approximately 50 km of roads in the Republic of Artsakh from this May till November of 2022, Arshamyan said, which is significant since the borders have changed and alternative internal routes are necessary.

Some of the Programs in Armenia

A number of important programs are being carried out at present in Armenia, in the border villages of Syunik, Tavush and in Gyumri. In Syunik, 12 programs were initiated in villages near the state border, including the renovation of 8 schools, and the provision of solar-powered water heaters for all residents in four places, Arshamyan said. At present, one million dollars from last year’s fundraising is being used towards these projects.

In Tavush province, the three villages of Berkaber, Paravakar and Baghanis will be provided with water. Barkaber will be able to irrigate 120 hectares of land, while the last two villages will be provided drinking water, which they previously lacked. These Tavush projects are using funds separate from last year’s war-connected fundraising.

In Gyumri, where people are still living in domiks or metal huts intended as temporary housing after the 1988 earthquake, homes will be provided for families by building two apartment buildings, and also initiating construction of two more buildings. Those from Gyumri who had lost limbs during the recent war or who are socioeconomically disadvantaged will be included. The two initial buildings will offer 36 apartments, 4 studios for artists, a kindergarten, and are being built with funding raised separately from the wartime campaign. The two planned buildings will include 60 apartments, of which 25 will be distributed to handicapped soldiers and officers with full accessibility features. They will be built with 2 million dollars from last year’s campaign.

Operations

The influx of huge sums of money, at least in the context of Armenia and Artsakh, might cause fears about corruption. Arshamyan noted that to prevent this, the Himnadram follows strict procedures. When money is given to a third party nonprofit for use, there is a grant agreement with a reporting mechanism. When the Himnadram carries out construction, it is done through tenders and competition, and there are strict rules and a reporting system. There is also supervision, he said, with visits on site during the course of the work. Arshamyan said, “It is true that large sums have been collected in a short period of time. We need to be very strict and transparent, and give reports to our donors.”

At the same time, he stated that it would not be possible to provide information about how money from an individual donor or organization was specifically used if it was not donated for a declared purpose. Arshamyan said, “It is a little like asking what happens to my taxes. What does the state do with that money?” For example, the roughly \$100,000 donated through the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada was given, as requested during the war, for general fundraising and so it was not separately tracked but was placed under one code together with all money received during the war. The forthcoming 2020 annual report of the Himnadram, consequently, will explain what the total money raised during wartime was used for during that year.

Arshamyan spoke forcefully on the importance of Artsakh strategically and the goal of the Artsakh government to bring back all the refugees. He said, “We cannot leave these people and say, do whatever you want. We must stand with Artsakh and strengthen it through diplomacy and expenditures. Artsakh without people will have no value. Meanwhile, however long the refugees stay in Armenia, we will continue to help them.”



INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Turkey and Azerbaijan Relocating Afghan Terrorists into Nagorno-Karabakh - ICC

WASHINGTON (Panorama.am) — Reports indicate that Turkey and Azerbaijan may be in the process of relocating Afghan terrorists into the Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh), International's Christian Concern (ICC) reported this week. It is noted that Al-Qaeda militants are reportedly part of Turkey's efforts to utilize mercenaries in regional disputes, such as Syrian terrorists in the 44-day war in Nagorno-Karabakh. The source cited Nagorno-Karabakh Foreign Minister David Babayan saying in the occupied parts of Nagorno-Karabakh there are already a lot of international terrorist groups controlled by Turkey that are out of Azerbaijani control.

According to the the ICC, Turkey has also recently established a command center in Baku, allowing it to leverage its position in the country. Turkey's role in Afghanistan remains to be seen, though it is clear that Turkey is interested in a relationship with the Taliban but does not want to accept any of the country's refugees.

Pashinyan Congratulates Putin On Election Win

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on September 20, congratulated Russian President Vladimir Putin on the United Russia Party's "convincing" victory in parliamentary elections held over the weekend.

"The election results testify to support shown by citizens of Russia for policies consistently implemented by the country's political leadership," Pashinyan said in a congratulatory message publicized by his office.

He expressed confidence that "close cooperation" between the newly elected State Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, and the Armenian National Assembly will help "advance the Russian-Armenian alliance."

With 99.7 percent of ballots counted, the Russian Central Election Commission said United Russia, which backs Putin, won 49.84 percent of the vote. Its closest rival, the Communist Party, had 18.95 percent, and the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party received 7.5 percent.

United Russia Secretary-General Andrei Turchak said the party expects to control 315 of the Duma's 450 seats, giving it a comfortable two-thirds majority that continues to allow it to change the constitution.

The three-day elections were marred by allegations of voting irregularities and ballot tampering. An independent monitoring agency called them "one of the dirtiest" elections in Russian history.

Germany said on September 20 that the allegations must be taken "seriously and should be clarified" and the European Union denounced the climate of "intimidation" in the run up to the vote.

Pashinyan Said to Seek Meeting With Erdogan

MEETING, from page 1

"As of now, there have been no contacts between Armenian and Turkish officials, even though the Armenian government is prepared for such contacts," Gevorgyan told Armenpress news agency. "In the event of such productive work, Armenia will also be ready for meetings at a high and the highest level."

Gevorgyan also criticized Erdogan's calls for the "Nakhichevan corridor," saying that such statements run counter to efforts to establish "peace and stability and overcome the atmosphere of enmity in the region." She said that Armenia stands for the opening of all regional transport links.

Pashinyan spoke on August 27 of "some positive signals" sent by the Turkish government to Yerevan and said his administration is ready to reciprocate them.

Erdogan responded by saying that Ankara is open to normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations. But he cited in that context Azerbaijan's demands for a formal Arme-

nian recognition of Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Pashinyan described Erdogan's statements as encouraging and reiterated his readiness to embark on a dialogue with Ankara hours before flying to Tbilisi on September 8.

Armenian opposition leaders and some analysts say Ankara continues to link the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations to a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict favorable to Baku. They say the Turks also want Yerevan to stop campaigning for a greater international recognition of the 1915 Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire.

Erdogan expressed hope on Sunday that the "problem between Armenia and Azerbaijan will be overcome through the opening of corridors."

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev threatened earlier this year to forcibly open a corridor to Nakhichevan through Armenia's southeastern Syunik province

repeatedly described by him as "historical Azerbaijani lands." Yerevan strongly condemned the threat.

A Russian-brokered ceasefire agreement that stopped last year war in Karabakh commits Armenia to opening rail and road links between Nakhichevan and the rest of Azerbaijan. Armenia should be able, for its part, to use Azerbaijani territory as a transit route for cargo ships to and from Russia and Iran.

Armenian leaders maintain that the agreement does not call for the creation of a permanent land corridor for Nakhichevan. The Azerbaijani region also borders Turkey.

Turkey provided decisive military assistance to Azerbaijan during the six-week war in Karabakh. Armenia says that Turkish military personnel participated in the hostilities on the Azerbaijani side along with thousands of mercenaries recruited in Syria's Turkish-controlled northern regions.

Azerbaijani, Turkish and Pakistani War Games Appear to Prompt Iran to Move Infantry to Border

By Daniel Rad

LONDON (IntelliNews) — Iran appears to have moved infantry divisions and rocket artillery to its northwestern border with Azerbaijan amid indignation in Tehran at military exercises performed by the self-styled "Three Brothers"—Azerbaijan, Turkey and Pakistan—and attempts by Baku to hinder Iranian trade flows that are important to the ethnic Armenians of the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave.

One representative of Iran's supreme leader warned Azerbaijan to not "play with the lion's tail."

Social media lit up, meanwhile, with Iranian hardliners posting comments on the war games organized by Baku, Ankara and Islamabad, which by all accounts compelled Tehran to send troops and weapons, including armed drones, to the border with Azerbaijan in a show of force. When General Hikmat Mirzayev, Azerbaijan's special forces commander, said during the commencement of the military exercises that cooperation between the "Brothers" was at "the highest level," it got backs up in Iran. Another annoyance was Turkey's participation last week with Azerbaijani forces in submarine and defense group armed forces exercises on the Caspian Sea—the Iranian foreign ministry has referred to the "illegality" of the Turkish presence as regards a convention signed by the states with a Caspian coast.

An unverified video circulated on Iranian Telegram social media channels, reportedly filmed from the Azerbaijani side of the Aras River that separates Iran and Azerbaijan, shows dozens of Iranian infantry divisions and rocket units moving towards the Parsabad area in Ardabil Province, which borders Azerbaijan.

Another video, put out by the Telegram channel of Miran Press, which is closely aligned with Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), shows dozens of Iranian military trucks heading to the border.

Imposition of Road 'Tax'

Iran has lately been annoyed by a new Azerbaijani tactic of imposing a \$130 road "tax" on Iranian truckers transporting badly needed goods including oil and gasoline to the ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Kara-

bakh, who lost territory to Azerbaijan in last autumn's war over the breakaway territory. A small part of the road the Iranian trucks use to reach Nagorno-Karabakh runs across Azerbaijani territory and Baku has seized on this fact to demand the tax. Matters escalated on September 15 when Baku confirmed it had detained two Iranian truck drivers. Tehran attempts to show a studied neutrality in the dispute between Baku and the Armenians over Nagorno-Karabakh, but the move against the trucks has tested its patience.

It was apparently the arrest of the truck drivers that spurred the Iranian supreme leader's representative in Ardabil, largely inhabited by Iranian Azerbaijanis (who nationwide make up around a fifth of Iran's population), to warn Azerbaijan not to "play with the lion's tail." The representative, Seyyed Hassan Ameli, added that the IRGC should demonstrate Iran's strength to both Azerbaijan and Turkey.

'An Incident That Cannot Be Ignored'

"Any country has the right to invite another country to conduct military exercises. But there was an incident here that cannot be ignored," Ameli said. "On the eve of the start of the exercises, the Turkish newspaper *Yeni Safak*, which expresses the point of view of the government and of the president of Turkey personally, chose the following headline for an interview with a member of the Azerbaijani parliament: 'Iran will disappear from the map.'"

"We ask the Supreme National Security Council to allow the IRGC to demonstrate just one half of Iran's power on this side of the border and to tell them 'Do not play with the lion's tail,'" Ameli said.

As part of the deployment of troops, Iran on September 20 reportedly tested the Mohajer-6 armed drones of the IRGC's aerospace division.

Iranian political specialist Vardan Voskanyan made what many Azerbaijanis might take as some provocative comments on his social media channel on September 20. As reported by News.am, he said: "The scope of Iranian military exercises on the border with an artificial formation called Azerbaijan is extremely remarkable in itself."

He added: "Judging by the materials made

widespread by Iranian sources, it covers almost the entire length of the Iranian border with the Talysh regions of Azerbaijan."

The Talysh in Azerbaijan are a non-Turkic, mainly rural people who speak an Indo-European language close to Persian. "Considering that the Talysh problem has become somewhat exacerbated in Azerbaijan recently, leading even to the fact that one of the Talysh organisations with extremely moderate positions is left in serious dissatisfaction, then the choice of zone for the Iranian military exercises clearly contains several open messages at once," Voskanyan also said.

Kremlin Says Russia Regrets Turkey's Refusal to Recognize Election Results in Crimea

MOSCOW (TASS) — The Kremlin regrets Turkey's refusal to recognize the results of the recent Russian legislative elections in Crimea and hopes the republic will change its stance on the peninsula, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday, September 21.

"We don't accept such statements [about non-recognition of the elections in Crimea] and we openly say this to our Turkish colleagues," Peskov said. "The issue of Crimea is an issue on which our positions are dramatically different. We express regrets in connection with this stance, but we hope that political will would be shown over time and Turkey will change this position, simply acknowledging the truth and the real state of things," he added.

Peskov also stressed that Turkey is Russia's partner and the "presence of significant issues on which there are disagreements, is not and should not be an obstacle for the development of the whole range of bilateral relations and cooperation on a number of regional issues."



INTERNATIONAL

Armenian, Iranian Leaders Discuss Closer Ties Amid Transport Hurdles

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan (RFE/RL) — Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan discussed on Friday, September 17 ways of deepening bilateral commercial ties complicated by an Azerbaijani checkpoint set up on the main highway connecting the two neighboring states.

Raisi and Pashinyan met on the sidelines of a Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) summit in Tajikistan on September 17 as Azerbaijani officers stopped and demanded hefty payments from Iranian trucks transporting goods to and from Armenia for the sixth consecutive day.

More than a hundred such trucks were reportedly stranded on Thursday, September 16, at a 21-kilometer section of the highway which the Armenian government controversially ceded to Azerbaijan following last year's war in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijani authorities set up the checkpoint there on Sunday after again accusing Iranian trucks of illegally shipping cargos to Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Armenian government press office said Pashinyan and Raisi discussed, among other things, ways of "organizing unfettered cargo ships between the two countries" as well as "processes taking place in the region." It gave no details.

The official Iranian readout of the talks

made no mention of the new obstacle to Armenian-Iranian trade and wider transport links. It stressed Raisi "stressed the need to increase the current level of economic relations between Iran and Armenia."

In that regard, the recently elected Iranian president was reported to say that an Armenian-Iranian intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation should become "more active." He proposed that Yerevan and Tehran set up joint "specialized working groups" that would deal with "obstacles" to the implementation of their joint economic projects.

According to the statement posted on the Iranian Foreign Ministry's website, Pashinyan pledged to "instruct relevant ministers" to remove those obstacles.

It was Pashinyan's second meeting with Raisi in less than two months. The two men held their first face-to-face talks in early August when the Armenian premier visited Tehran to attend Raisi's swearing-in ceremony held in the Iranian parliament.

During those talks Pashinyan reaffirmed his brief readiness to have Iranian companies participate in its plans to refurbish Armenian highways leading to the Islamic Republic. The two governments set up in May a working group tasked with looking into practical aspects of such participation.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, at right, and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meet in Dushanbe, September 17, 2021.

UK Armenia Ambassador Nersesyan Meets with Leader of All-Party Parliamentary Group for Armenia

LONDON — On September 20, Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan met Tim Loughton, the Head of the All-Party Parliamentary Group, a member of the Conservative Party.

During the meeting Loughton congratulated the Ambassador on his appointment, emphasizing his readiness to work closely with the new ambassador on a number of issues on the Armenian-British agenda and expressing confidence that



Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan meets with Tim Loughton, the head of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Armenia.

the Ambassador's appointment will give new impetus to the bilateral relations. He noted that APPG for Armenia, which was re-launched in July 2020, was quite active especially during the events of July last year, as well as the Artsakh war and in the post-war period.

Nersesyan expressed his gratitude to Loughton for the large-scale work done by the group led by him, noting that the support of our country's friends during the war was very important for Armenia. Ambassador also presented the latest developments in the region, in particular in Artsakh, on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, the prospects of the process of international recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Nersesyan expressed hope that in the near future it will be possible to enhance the cooperation between the parliaments of the two states, especially after the formation of the Armenian-British friendship group in the National Assembly of Armenia.

Speaking about the forthcoming COP-26 summit in Glasgow the Ambassador underlined the importance that Armenia is attaching to the fight against climate change and looking forward to having its constructive contribution to the positive outcome of the summit. The interlocutors agreed that Armenia and the United Kingdom have a great potential to expand their cooperation in the field of the climate change.

Taking the opportunity, Loughton congratulated Nersesyan on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Armenia's Independence, wishing progress, development and peace.

Armenia Takes Azerbaijan to International Court of Justice

JUSTICE, from page 1

hatred, Armenians have been subjected to systemic discrimination, mass killings, torture and other abuse."

Azerbaijan has responded by stating that they intend to bring a similar case against Armenia.

"Azerbaijan will file a lawsuit against Armenia with the UN International Court [of Justice] for Yerevan's permanent violation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Leyla Abdullayeva told the media.

Armenia's application comes almost a year after the outbreak of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War and includes complaints going back decades, from Azerbaijan's release of Ramil Safarov to the 'incessant stream of anti-Armenian propaganda emanating from Azerbaijan's leadership' during the 2020 war.

Armenia claims that Azerbaijan has committed "grave violations" of the CERD. They accuse Azerbaijan of continuing "to engage in the murder, torture and other

abuse of Armenian prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons' even after the Russia-brokered ceasefire in November 2020.

The application also referred to the "discrimination in employment, housing, health, and education" that ethnic Armenians allegedly face in Azerbaijan and the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage in the region.

In addition to the general complaint, Armenia also asked for provisional measures to be imposed "as a matter of extreme urgency."

In particular, the country requested the court order Azerbaijan to "release immediately all Armenian prisoners of war, hostages and other detainees in its custody" and to stop the mistreatment of the captives.

"Azerbaijan shall refrain from espousing hatred of people of Armenian ethnic or national origin," the application reads. "Including by closing or suspending the activities of the Military Trophies Park."

Armenia also requested that Azerbaijan be ordered to refrain from and prevent the

destruction of Armenian historic monuments in Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

The International Court of Justice is one of the dispute resolution mechanisms for the countries that have signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Armenia and Azerbaijan acceded to the convention in 1993 and 1996, respectively.

According to the regulation, if neither parties 'has made any reservations to Article 22 or to any other provision of the Convention', one state may take another to the court.

Before applying to the ICJ, states that have a dispute with respect to the "interpretation or application" of the CERD, should try to solve the dispute through negotiation or "by the procedures expressly provided for in the CERD."

In a similar case, Georgia applied against Russia days after the 2008 August War. Russia objected, claiming that Georgia had 'failed to exhaust a preliminary requirement ... to attempt to resolve the

dispute by negotiation before submitting it to the ICJ'.

In 2011, the Court upheld Russia's objection, and "noted that Georgia did not claim that, prior to seizing the Court, it had used or attempted to use the procedures expressly provided for in CERD."

However, Armenia's application claims to meet all the requirements of the Convention for the Court to proceed with the case.

As evidence Armenia claims that it has repeatedly attempted to negotiate with Azerbaijan over their alleged violations of the CERD, citing the exchange of over 40 pieces of correspondence with Azerbaijan since the end of the war as well as seven rounds of meetings "in an effort to settle this dispute amicably."

According to Armenia, "Azerbaijan has steadfastly refused to acknowledge any merit to Armenia's claims and requested remedies" and that for now, "there is no reasonable prospect" that Azerbaijan's position will change, meeting the ICJ's requirements for jurisdiction over the dispute.

Community News

Assembly Welcomes Key Amendments To National Defense Authorization Act

WASHINGTON — A series of ten key human rights and accountability amendments were submitted to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2022, known as bill H.R. 4350, reported the Armenian Assembly of America last week. The proposed amendments express serious concerns over human rights violations on a global scale, as well as address security and humanitarian issues resulting from Azerbaijan's 44-day war against Artsakh.

Chairman of the House Rules Committee James McGovern (D-MA) sponsored Amendment #655, which "modifies the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (Subtitle F of title XXI of PL 114-328) to authorize sanctions for serious human rights abuse, any violation of internationally recognized human rights, or corruption; adds two new reports to Congress; and repeals the sunset."

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) sponsored Amendment #560, cosponsored by Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-CA), which "expresses the Sense of Congress that the government of Azerbaijan should immediately return all Armenian prisoners of war and captured civilians. Urges the Administration to engage with Azerbaijani authorities, including through the OSCE Minsk Group, to make clear the importance of adhering to their obligations under the November 9 statement and international law to immediately release all prisoners of war and captured civilians."

Rep. David Valadao (R-CA) sponsored Amendment #408, a bipartisan amendment cosponsored by Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), which "requires a report within 180 days of all US humanitarian and developmental assistance programs in Nagorno Karabakh, including an analysis of the effectiveness of such programs and any plans for future assistance."

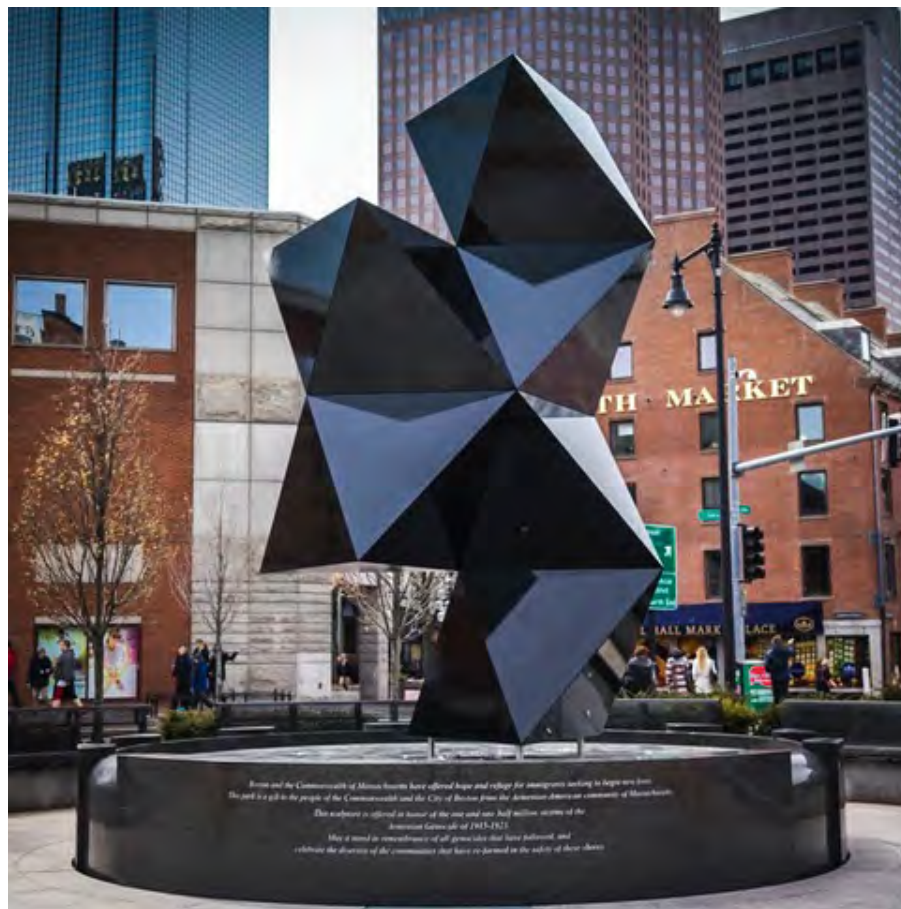
Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV) sponsored Amendment #579, which "requires a report by the Secretary of State on the activities of the Grey Wolves organization (AKA Bozkurtlar & Ülkü Ocakları) undertaken against U.S. interests, allies, and international partners, including a review of the criteria met for designation as a foreign terrorist organization."

Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-CA) sponsored Amendment #586, cosponsored by Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), which "creates a report on Azerbaijan's activities in Nagorno Karabakh in 2020 to be submitted to the relevant congressional committees by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the Secretary of State."

Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) sponsored Amendment #696, which "requires the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to submit to the congressional defense committees a report on Azerbaijan."

These amendments are in addition to the following that were submitted on September 10:

see NDAA, page 9



2017 Abstract-Sculpture-April-2017-55-1

Armenian Heritage Park Inspires Geometry As Public Art

BOSTON — Geometry as Public Art: Telling a Story, the innovative curriculum sparked by Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, its design and key geometric features that tell the story of the immigrant experience, is being implemented this school year at nine elementary schools including seven Boston Public Schools (BPS) and two private schools.

The organization EdVestors, dedicated to "meaningful education that prepares every Boston student to activate their power and shape their future," is providing the funding to support round trip bus transportation to/from Park and teacher training. The curriculum aligns with two of EdVestor's key initiatives with the Boston Public School- BPS Arts Expansion and Zeroing in on Math. "We are excited to work alongside you and see how this project continues to blossom and impact students," comments Alia Verner, director of Strategic School Support for EdVestors.

Beginning this school year, "Geometry as Public Art: Telling a Story" is being implemented in 4th grade classes in the following Boston Public Schools: Harvard-Kent Elementary School in Charlestown, Higginson-Lewis K-8 School and Nathan Hale Elementary School in Roxbury, Josiah Quincy School in Chinatown, the Hurly School in the South End and the William Monroe Trotter K-8 School in Dorchester.

For several years prior, the curriculum was piloted by the teachers in their 4th grade classes at the Eliot K-8 Innovation School, BPS in the North End, in collaboration with several educators among Friends of Armenian Heritage Park. The Friends is an initiative of the Armenian Heritage Foundation, sponsor of Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. The foundation's board is composed of representatives from Armenian-American parishes and organizations within the Commonwealth.

The key intent of "Geometry as Public Art: Telling a Story" is to spark awareness of geometric shapes and their creative expression of ideas and thoughts expressed by the geometric features of Armenian Heritage Park that tell the story of the immigrant experience. In doing so, engages students to learn about and share the experience of the first person in their family to come to this country. Many students realize this discovery for the first time; for some, sharing their own experience. All are building common ground, a key theme of the Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway.

The spark to develop the curriculum was the comment of a young student during the visit with her 4th grade class from the Advent School on Boston's Beacon Hill. That visit was soon after Armenian Heritage Park opened in 2012. Several years earlier cultural organizations and ethnic communities were provided the opportunity to develop and fund a parcel on what was to become the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway with the Central Artery relocated underground. Parcel 13 was to become Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, a gift to the City of Boston and Commonwealth from the Armenian American community.

"He's talking about me," whispered the 4th grader as Don Tellalian, AIA, the park's architect/designer was speaking about the significance of the annual reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture.

Annually, the Abstract Sculpture, a split rhomboid dodecahedron made of stainless steel and aluminum, is reconfigured. In early Spring, a crane lifts, pulls apart and reconfigures its two halves to create a new sculptural shape. This is symbolic of all who

see INSPIRATION, page 12

Pastor's Commitment Brings a Revival of Parish Life to the Eastern Diocese's Kansas City Church

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — When an Armenian pastor took a family trip to Kansas City, MO, he found a new flock that was eager for his attention and care.

As the priest of Eastern Diocese's St. Sahag Church in Minneapolis, MN, Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan had already brought a spirit of energy and excitement to a parish that had previously gone without fulltime pastoral leadership. But he had heard about a parish within driving distance of his home city that was struggling without a priest of its own.

"I drove with my family to Kansas City, and met with the wonderful Armenian community there," recalls Barseghyan. "They taught me about their beloved St. Garabed Church, which was having services and gatherings only a few times a year. Listening to them, I made a commitment then and there to help the community."

His commitment involves visiting the parish at least once every two months, to celebrate the badarak, tend to spiritual needs of the people, and otherwise bring them together in worship and Christian fellowship.

It's a six-hour drive from Minneapolis to Kansas City, but Fr. Barseghyan is happy to undertake the journey. "It doesn't feel right to me, knowing there is an Armenian parish only six hours away, that needs the guidance of a pastor," he says. "How could I not reach out to help them?"

After his initial visit, he related these thoughts to Bishop Daniel Finikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America — who was enthusiastic about giving the plan his blessing. Thus, Barseghyan was formally assigned as the visiting priest of St. Garabed Church.

Before taking that step, however, Barseghyan also wanted to discuss the matter with the parish council of St. Sahag Church, which would have to undertake a sacrifice of its own each time he visited Kansas City. However, the Minneapolis church was happy to encourage this expansion of their pastor's ministry.

"My parishioners at St. Sahag recognized their own history in the situation at St. Garabed," Fr. Tadeos says. "For many years, St. Sahag didn't have a permanent pastor; every Sunday saw different clergy from our Diocese visiting the parish for badarak. The people were grateful for that; but the situation also made it challenging for the community to connect, and develop the structure needed for a full-time parish."

"Now, we are blessed to be in a position to reach out and help another parish in our Diocese," he adds. In fact, the entire Minneapolis community is delighted to be [helping a sister parish in this way](#).

Community Outreach

The first official visit to St. Garabed Church took place last June, when some 70 faithful Armenians

see REVIVAL, page 11



COMMUNITY NEWS

Assembly Welcomes Key Amendments to National Defense Authorization Act

NDAA, from page 8

Amendment #52 to H.R. 4350, sponsored by Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), stipulates that “no Federal funds may be obligated or expended to provide any United States military or security assistance or cooperation to the defense or security forces of the Government of Azerbaijan.”

Amendment #90 to H.R. 4350, sponsored by Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA), “prohibits the transfer of United States security assistance to the Government of

Azerbaijan.”

Amendment #122 to H.R. 4350, sponsored by Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), “withholds U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan through the Section 333 Building Partner Capacity Program.”

Amendment #123 to H.R. 4350, sponsored by Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), “requires a report from the Secretary of Defense, in collaboration with the Secretary of State, addressing allegations that some units of foreign countries that

have participated in security cooperation programs under section 333 of title 10, U.S.C. may have also committed gross violations of internationally recognized human rights before or while receiving U.S. security assistance. This report would also include recommendations to improve human rights training and additional measures that can be adopted to prevent these types of violations.”

“The Armenian Assembly of America welcomes these ten key human rights

and accountability amendments,” stated Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “In the aftermath of the 44-day war launched against the people of Artsakh, these amendments address critically important issues and we urge their adoption,” added Ardouny.

The House Rules Committee will likely meet during the week of September 20, 2021 to review hundreds of amendments to the Fiscal Year 2022 NDAA (H.R. 4350).

OBITUARY

Prof. Lucy Der Manuelian Dies

Pioneering Scholar of Armenian Art History, Culture

BELMONT, Mass. — On September, 20, 2021, Prof. Lucy Der Manuelian passed away at her home.

Dr. Der Manuelian (fondly referred to by many as “Lucy”) was the founder and first occupant of the Arthur H. Dadian and Ara T. Oztemel Chair of Armenian Art in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at Tufts University.

The Tufts chair is the first and only endowed professorship of Armenian art outside the Republic of Armenia. It was launched in 1984 as a rotating lectureship at Tufts in conjunction with Harvard, McGill, Boston University and Northeastern University, so that courses in Armenian art could be taught at each institution in succession. In 1989, the lectureship became an endowed position with a permanent home at Tufts. This is due entirely to Lucy’s energies, and the financial support of New Deal attorney Arthur H. Dadian and import/export magnate Ara T. Oztemel, the latter known for bringing Coca-Cola to the Soviet Union.

Der Manuelian retired in 2006.

Lucy was educated at Harvard (Radcliffe), and, after a 20-year hiatus from academia in which she raised two children, received her PhD at Boston University in 1980. Her dissertation was supported by a fellowship at the Bunting (now the Harvard-Radcliffe) Institute (1971-1973), and an IREX (International Research and Exchange Board) grant in 1977 for travel to the Soviet Union.

The project, supervised by noted scholar of Islamic art, Oleg Grabar, concerned the medieval sculptural program of Geghard, and was the first serious English-language monograph on that site.

Lucy’s project was innovative in its comparative approach to the monument, considering the sculptural program of Geghard in relation not only to Armenian iconography, but also to the artistic traditions of Byzantium and Islam. Her dissertation is also widely considered to be the first American dissertation dedicated to Armenian art.

Lucy lent her expertise in Armenian art

and architecture to a range of scholarly projects, writing articles on major Armenian monuments and artistic themes for *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (1982-1989) and *Grove Dictionary of Art* (now Oxford Art Online). She was an author and researcher for the massive microfiche work known as *Armenian Architecture* (Zug: Inter Documentation, c. 1980-c.1990). She contributed articles to several important Armenological volumes, including *Medieval Armenian Culture* (Thomas Samuelian, ed., Chico: Scholars Press, 1984).

In addition to work on Armenian architecture and sculpture, Lucy published widely on a variety of topics within Armenian art. Among her most noted projects are her publications on carpets, including the exhibition catalogue, *Weavers, Merchants, and Kings: The Inscribed Rugs of Armenia- Kimbell Art Museum* (Forth Worth, Kimbell Art Museum 1984) which provided a crucial English-language scholarly foundation for the history of Armenian rug weaving. Lucy’s interests also extended to the study of important Armenian-Americans, including Moses Gulesian.

In addition to contributing to conventional academic projects, she was remarkably prescient about technology, making use of film and the internet (as early as the 1990s) in her pedagogy and research.

Lucy is best known in the Armenian community as a tireless advocate for Armenian art, lecturing to audiences around the world, and educating Armenians in the US about their rich medieval cultural heritage. Almost everyone in the community has a “Lucy story” about the first time they heard her lecture. She was an activist for Armenian cultural heritage long before that concept became familiar to us all.

Lucy was fearless, physically and psychologically. Before the era of drones, she hung out of helicopters to take good aerial shots of monasteries and churches. At the height of the Soviet period, the KGB suspected that she was a spy because of all her travel and photography. One night the they visited her in Yerevan, and, to avoid handing over the film, Lucy hid it inside



her dress, daring them to manhandle her. Art history won.

As everyone who knew her can attest, Lucy was unconventional and indomitable. An avid tennis player, she had boundless energy. She believed in using every minute: she kept a stack of books in the car and read at every stoplight (often to the consternation of drivers behind her). She kept apples and packets of cheese and crackers in her pockets to eat on the go, but was also a very fine chef, such that Julia Child came to her house for dinner and enjoyed Lucy’s chicken cooked with cherries.

Lucy sometimes held office hours in her car if she couldn’t find a parking spot.

Along with her family and friends, the entire Armenian community, the Tufts community, her students, and her col-

leagues, I am intensely sad to know that Lucy is no longer with us. She was a life force for Armenian art. I was so fortunate to learn from and be mentored by her. I think she was happiest standing in front of an audience, sharing her knowledge about Armenian art. I remember her telling me that before beginning a presentation, you should pause and smile at your audience (she had a thousand-watt smile). I hope she is doing that now, giving her “helicopter lecture” (as we affectionately called it) and teaching a whole new audience about Armenian art.

Christina Maranci

Arthur H. Dadian and Ara T. Oztemel

Professor of Armenian Art

Tufts University

Medford, Mass.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Cleveland Armenian Festival a Hit

CLEVELAND, from page 1

Karoghlanian is practically the one-woman foundation of the Cleveland community. Having served as chair for many years, it is her family legacy and clearly her passion. (She is also a Diocesan Council member.) Born in Cleveland, her grandparents were immigrants from Malatia, like many of the early settlers, and staunch Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) members. “I was telling our [municipal] councilwoman, after the Turkish massacre it was our community’s dream to build a church here. And it took selling red Easter Eggs door to door, but we finally built the church in 1962.” While much of the population today has recently arrived from Armenia, the families that built the church are still the central organizers of much of what goes on, though the relative newcomers seem eager to volunteer and take on new responsibilities.

Even though Karoghlanian grew up attending ADL conventions with her grandfather and joined the organization herself, partisan divides are less important than keeping the Armenians together. “Those divisions don’t



Children’s Craft Activities (photo: Maral Antonyan)

matter as much anymore,” says Serop Demirjian, a native of Sasoun, father, grandfather, and deacon of the church. An Antelias-based group in town used to rent space and hold services and events, but they eventually gave up and now everyone in the area goes to St. Gregory. The folks in Cleveland seem to want to avoid the political infighting and bureaucratic nature of Armenian institutions. They run things their way, with little interference from the fast-paced and divisive outside world of the East Coast, Detroit, Chicago and California.

Festival Brings All Together

One of the most aspects of the festival is the large amount of non-Armenians in attendance. Karoghlanian estimates that a quarter of festival attendees are non-Armenian neighbors, friends, and colleagues. In particular, community members invite their co-workers or supervisors, and folks who live in the residential area adjacent to the church walk over to enjoy Armenian hospitality. The “guests” are excited to try Armenian foods and some of them stated that they make it a point to come each year. Beef shish kebab, chicken kebab, rice and bulgur pilaf, cheese beoreg, eetch, and other delicacies were for sale along with deserts like *pakhlava*, *khadayif*, and *ghourabia*. The *ganach fasoulya* (Armenian green bean stew) was particularly well-received. Just as with many other Armenian festivals in the US this year, lamb was not on the menu, seemingly because shortages due to Covid have driven up the price. Instead, the special offering of the day was a version of *lule kebab* (“kyabab,” as it’s called in Yerevan) made from ground pork and chicken, popular in today’s Armenia.

Deacon Serop Demirjian, the ever-smiling and friendly pillar of the community who was born in the mountains of Sasoun, Eastern Turkey, long after 1915, and has served as deacon-in-charge during the absence of a priest, manned the beer station. It is difficult to think of something more “Midwest Armenian” than a church food festival commissioning a custom microbrew for their event. The concept, which was the brainchild of church member Peter Zahirsky, was carried out by local brewer Karl Spiesman. This is the fourth year the Festival has had a custom beer; previous renditions have emphasized Armenian fruits such as pomegranate (unsuccessful) and two varieties of apricot (highly successful). This year’s was “Hye Hefeweizen grapefruit Armenian citrus witbeir.” Grapefruit is Armenian? Zahirsky admits it’s a stretch, but justifies the choice as an homage to the Armenian citrus growers of Fresno.

Zahirsky, like seemingly every community member, has an interesting story that might seem atypical to the rest of

“Armenian America.” Raised in southern Ohio as the son of a Russian Orthodox priest, his mother is Armenian – and the daughter of the St. Gregory of Narek parish’s original godfather. Moving back to Cleveland as an adult, he re-immersed himself in community and Armenian Church life and is a staunch supporter of Armenia. And he views St. Gregory of Narek parish as his grandfather’s legacy of survival from Ottoman brutality.

Little (Eastern) Armenia

Connection to the homeland runs deep in Cleveland, which is known for its high percentage of relatively recent Armenian immigrants from Yerevan and Baku. But the Midwestern atmosphere makes some aspects of community life feel more like a transported Armenian village in Lori or Artsakh than like the streets of Glendale. During the festival, the men congregated around their kebab grills and sipped vodka while preparing the meat. Women danced to the music of the three-piece band, comprised of Boston’s Mher Mnatsakanyan (duduk, clarinet) and Markos Shahbazyan (vocal, drum) with Cleveland’s own Grigor “Gokor” Galstyan on accordion. Galstyan is an old hand at this — he is prepared for almost any kind of Armenian song and harmonizes with vigor. And perhaps unexpectedly, he enjoys the music performed on oud by American-born Armenians. “When I was a young man in Yerevan, I played in a group with myself, a duduk player, an oud player, and a kamancha player,” he states, “what a sound!”

The band performed a genre not heard very often in the Eastern US, at least not live — authentic contemporary Eastern Armenian folk music. This music, which features the clarinet backed by heavy accordion and the rhythmic dhol drum, is the type played by villagers or at outdoor picnics in Armenia. Listeners of Anatolian-Armenian folk music can readily relate to the soulful strains of clarinet and the heavy minor-key melodies. Those who have visited Armenia will recall this music from *madagh* picnics and similar events. For natives of the Republic, it is the sound of home. Well known songs such as *Yarn-Anush*, *Sareri Hovin Mernem*, and others followed in succession. The *Hayastantsi* women danced in their Armenian solo *naz bar* style, and as the music picked up, the American Armenians led their sprightly *shourch* bars which the others joined in. The scene was a true *mélange* of the different regions and backgrounds of Armenian culture as shouts of “*aman!*” were heard from one direction and “*tsavet danem!*” from the other.

The height of musical emotion was reached when a slim, unassuming young woman with straight brown hair emerged from the group and approached the microphone. The young lady was Lusine Makaryan, a 25-year-old native of Yerevan, married and a mother of one girl with a second child on the way. As she lifted up her voice in a tearful ballad telling of the conflict that broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2016, those gathered were visibly moved, whether or not they could understand all the words. Clarinet virtuoso Mnatsakanyan didn’t miss a beat. He followed Makaryan’s impromptu song with a



Tables Enjoying the Armenian Festival (Photo: Harry Kezelian)

soulful interpretation of the heartrending folk song *Sareri Hovin Mernem*.

Something for Everyone

Mnatsakanyan’s group was not the only musical entertainment. On Friday, the first night of the event, a talented young musician from Erie, Penn., named Nicholas Nasibyan performed on keyboard with a drummer and various



Dn. Serop Demirjian mans the beer tap (photo: Harry Kezelian)

guests. Nasibyan is not a typical keyboard player heard at Armenian events. He is a talented jazz pianist who uses the keyboard as a versatile and outdoor instrument. Recently reawakening to his Artsakh-Armenian roots, organizers said that Nasibyan learned some new repertoire in a few days (mostly Soviet Era pop-jazz pieces, like the famous *Ov Tu Keghetsig*) and was performing Armenian music in public for the first time at the festival.

No article about Cleveland would be complete without a reference to Fr. Hratch Sargsyan and his wife (*yeretzgin*) Naira Azatyan. Yeretzgin Naira acts a leader for her fellow *Hayastantsi* ladies in their service to the community and



From left, Markos Shahbazyan, Mher Mnatsakanyan, and Gokor Galstyan deal with a noise complaint (photo: Harry Kezelian)

as a maternal figure to all, the organization of the food sale operations of the festival being under her direction.

Fr. Hratch, the spiritual and communal leader of Cleveland’s Armenians, combines a high level of education and deep spiritual and personal understanding necessary to thrive in today’s American climate with a “regular guy” personality that endears him to his fellow natives of the Republic of Armenia. In other words, he is an excellent fit for a community that includes multi-generational families

trying to hold onto their roots and recent arrivals from Armenia who have their own issues and concerns. With his empathetic demeanor he welcomed all visitors and made sure that everything went well during the weekend, as well as giving church tours. In his Sunday sermon, he thanked the volunteers and stressed that the reason they do the festival is not just for money, but to show hospitality and welcome to others. Space does not allow us to continue to discuss the features such as visiting dancers from the local ballet, children’s crafts, and more.

The festival was so successful that the organizers ran out of food. As the stations shut down and the volunteers began to clean up the tables, someone announced that it was visiting dudukist Mher Mnatsakanyan’s birthday. Visibly moved, after the singing of *Happy Birthday*, Mnatsakanyan was dragged off to engage in vodka toasts with the grilling crew. As twilight gathered, it seemed one couldn’t tell if one was in Ohio or the Ararat Valley. The stars began to appear. “*Tsavet danem, aghper,*” someone said, “Mher *jan*, to your health.” Everyone raised a glass.



COMMUNITY NEWS



From left, Mayda Kuredjian, Edmond Azadian, Armen Baibourtian, and Mihran Minassian

Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Board Delegation
Visits Consulate General of Armenia in LA

GLENDAL — On September 16, President of the Board of Directors of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of the USA and Canada Edmond Azadian, board member Mihran Minassian, and TCA West Coast Executive Secretary Mayda Kuredjian visited the Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles.

During the meeting with the Consul General of Armenia in Los Angeles Ambassador Armen Baibourtian, items relating to the activities carried out by the Tekeyan Cultural Association in the recent period and its ongoing and forthcoming programs were discussed.

Baibourtian outlined the areas of mutual interest, in which close cooperation is anticipated between the Consulate General and the Tekeyan Cultural Association.

Pastor’s Commitment
Brings a Revival of
Parish Life to Kansas
City Church

REVIVAL, from page 8

from Kansas City turned out for the Badarak and subsequent social gathering. It was the first live worship service for the community since before the pandemic, in November 2019.

“Since a large segment of the community are Russian speakers, I deliver the sermon in Russian as well,” explains Barseghyan, who like most natives of Armenia (he was born in the city of Echmiadzin) is fluent in that language.

The most recent visit was in August. “I especially wanted to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption, and the Blessing of the Grapes, with the faithful in Kansas City,” he says. “We had around 70 people attending again. Among them are two new altar servers.”

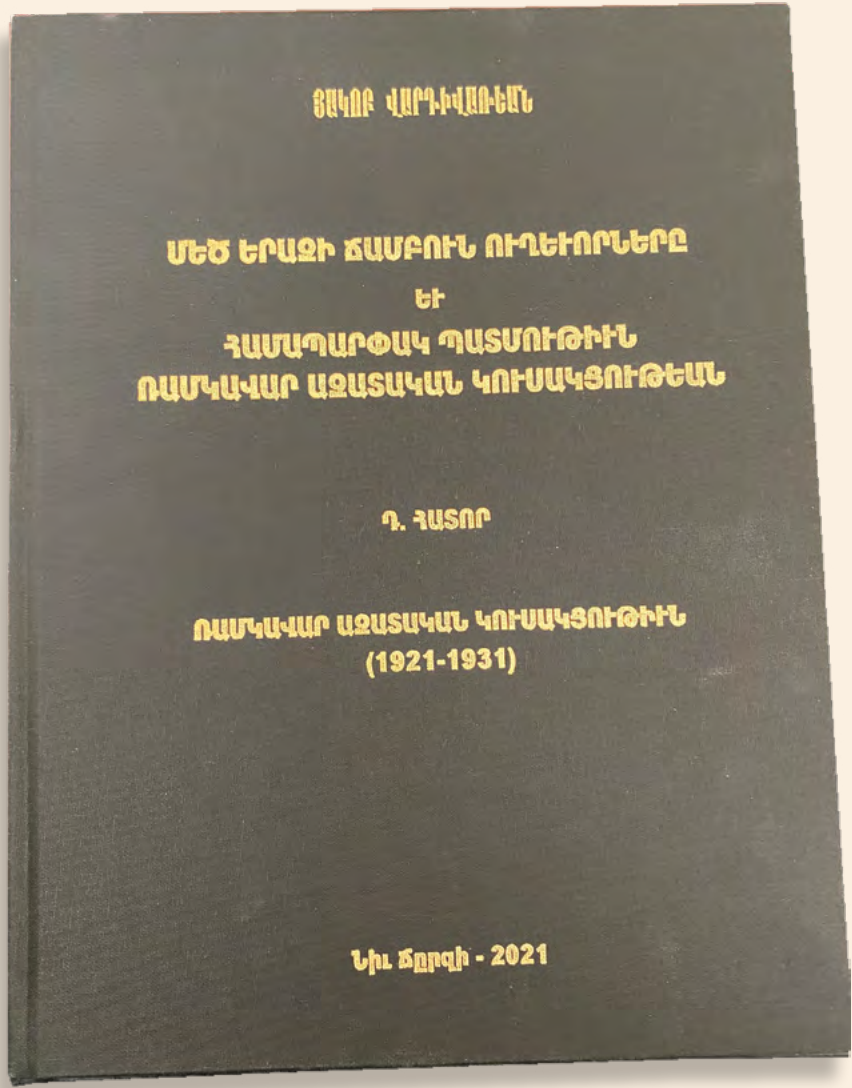
Barseghyan takes his family along for each visit, and they assist him in the sanctuary as well as in his ministry to the parishioners. “For Assumption, I drove to Kansas City with my son Khachadour, who has been my assistant on the altar throughout the pandemic,” he says. Each visit also has time devoted to home blessings, visitations to the sick, and other needed pastoral functions.

But in addition to these sacred duties, Fr. Tadeos’ presence has brought the parish together in other ways. For example, Kansas City is home to the impressive National World War I Museum and Memorial. Recently, the priest and members of the St. Garabed parish council met with museum officials to discuss ways of properly introducing the Armenian Genocide among the exhibits.

“Currently, the museum has very little information on the subject,” he says, “with some inaccuracies in the main gallery display about the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide. A few references mention the ‘massacre’ of the Armenians, without properly calling it a Genocide; and the April 24 arrests of Armenian intellectuals goes unmentioned.”

The delegation from St. Garabed presented their thoughts and suggestions to the museum, which welcomed the exchanged and scheduled a follow-up meeting for October.

St. Garabed Church maintains an active Facebook page, where readers can learn more about its history and latest activities, and view photos of parish life and people.



Hot off
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- Mary Keoleian**
Farmington Hills, MI \$50 in
memory of Nora Azadian

COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Heritage Park Inspires Geometry as Public Art

INSPIRATION, from page 8

left or were forced to pull away from their country of origin and came to these Massachusetts shores, establishing themselves in new and different ways.

The significance of the annual reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture, a shared experience, resonates with so many people. “Public Art ... permanent and alive...”, wrote Joanna Weiss in the *Boston Globe* 2015. In much the same way, the Labyrinth, circular winding path paved in grass and inlaid stone, celebrates life’s journey. The two features are connected by the waters of the Reflecting Pool upon which the Abstract Sculpture sits, washing over the sides and reemerging at the Labyrinth’s center as a single jet of water, symbolic of life and rebirth. The Inscription etched on the Reflecting Pool includes that Abstract Sculpture is dedicated “to lives lost during the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 and all genocides that have followed...”. Etched around the Labyrinth’s Circle are the words Service, Science, Commerce and Art, in tribute to contributions made to life and culture by all.

“Geometry as Public Art: Telling A Story” is engaging students to tell their own, their families’ or ancestors’ immigrant experience, prompting the realization that most all peoples come to this country from somewhere else. The multi-disciplinary curriculum creatively integrates geometry, art, language and social studies while promoting cross-cultural understanding and respect.

“The three thoughtfully planned lessons take educators and students on a path of self-discovery and storytelling, intertwining interactive classroom lessons and the hands-on nature of visiting the park. The culmination of celebrating the immigrant experience is as heart-warming and thought-provoking when the students share proudly their “I AM” Poems at the Park,” comments Morgan Atkins, former coordinator of Culture and School Climate at the Eliot Innovation K-8 School.

The students’ “I AM” Poems told in the voice of the first person in the student’s family who came to this country is a powerful, insightful culminating activity of the three-part curriculum. A geometric illustration and portrait of the individual accompanies each poem.

Successfully piloted for several years at The Eliot K-8 Innovation School, the comments of 4th grade educators reflect the curriculum’s intent, impact and value. Brianna Greene, curriculum team leader remarks, “This curriculum is an exciting and engaging way for students to learn more about their family heritage and reflect on the American immigration experience. The curriculum is a wonderful way for teachers to learn about and better understand their students and students to learn about one another.” Roxanne Emokpae comments, “The pride just exudes from my students as they draft and revise their ‘I AM’ Poems; being able to dive deep into their family’s arrival to America is so worthwhile.”

Alyssa Kotsiopoulos shares, “Implementing the curriculum in our classrooms at the beginning of the year is a great way to welcome students to 4th grade and to introduce our larger social studies immigration unit.”

Teachers are incorporating walking the labyrinth as a class, symbolic of their collective journey. They are also introducing the benefits of walking the labyrinth to quiet the mind and practice mindful meditation.

During the pandemic, the curriculum was adapted for remote learning with a video, “Join us! We’re on our Way to Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway.”

Upon completion of the curriculum this past year, several 4th grade students from the Eliot K-8 Innovation School with Brianna Green, 4th grade teacher met via ZOOM with older adults representing the ABCD North End Senior Center in the North End to share their “I AM” Poems, geometric illustrations and portraits of the first person to come to this country. This was the pilot for “Geometry as Public Art: Telling A Story – The Intergenerational Project,” a collaboration of Age Friendly Boston, Andrea Burns, director; the Eliot K-8 Innovation School and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to prompt and encourage intergenerational connections.

Boston City Counselor Julia Mejia, who participated in the pilot, shared, “I love this...and would like to be a part of making it happen across the city.”

“Wow, the experience of hearing the young students beautifully share their I AM Poems brought so much hope for our future as an inclusive society. Although each student had a unique heritage there was commonality in the journey. They are mature beyond their age,” shared Laura Bilazarian Purutyan, STEM Mentorship Consultant,

“The imagination, empathy and mysterious wisdom of our youth will save us, if we listen to them.”

Nearby each school, implementing the curriculum this fall, is a senior center to prompt this intergenerational initiative. One center is the UMass Boston Osher Lifelong Learning Center.

In addition to the curriculum, programs at the park are developed by the Friends of Armenian Heritage Park offered in collaboration with the Greenway Conservancy, City of Boston, Boston Public Schools, arts, historical and community organizations, engaging all ages coming together on common ground. Celebrating What Unites Us! offered in collaboration with Age-Friendly Boston, each month highlights the cultural heritage of many residents of the City and Commonwealth. Prior to the pandemic, an individual shared his/her immigrant experience in front of the Abstract Sculpture. The Welcome Reception for New Citizens at the Park following their Naturalization Ceremony at historic Faneuil Hall is always a highlight. Faneuil Hall is also the setting for the Park’s Najarian Lecture on Human Rights. The set-

ting at Faneuil Hall is in tribute to the New England women and men who, beginning in the 1890s at Faneuil Hall, heard the eyewitness accounts of the atrocities taking place against the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. Philanthropists nationwide raised over \$100 million in aid, considered America’s first international human rights movement.

Programs at the Park are planned by the Friends’ Programs Planning Team, each responsible for a key program and/or initiative. The 2021 Team, to date, includes Kristin Asadourian, Andrea Burns, Susan Deranian, Tom Dow, Catherine Minassian, Dr. Armineh Mirzabegian, Rita Pagliuca, Katrina Piehler, Tsolen Sarian and Ann Zacarian together with the Curriculum Team, Jason Behrens, Manneh Ghazarians and Barbara Tellalian. Reviewers of the Curriculum were Joseph Cahaly, Diana Topjian and Chiara Meghigian Zenati. Elizabeth Cahaly and Tom Cahaly developed the video, Join us! We’re on our Way to Armenian Heritage Park.

For further information about the curriculum, please email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org.

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Arts & Culture

Nairy Baghramian Wins 2022 Nasher Prize for Sculpture

By Peter Libbey

DALLAS (*New York Times*) — Nairy Baghramian on September 14 was announced as the winner of the 2022 Nasher Prize, an award given by the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas to a “living artist who elevates the understanding of sculpture and its possibilities.” As a part of the honor, Baghramian, who is based in Berlin, will receive \$100,000.

She will also be celebrated at a ceremony in Dallas next spring, where she will receive an award designed by Renzo Piano, the architect of the sculpture center. Previous recipients of the prize include Michael Rakowitz, Doris Salcedo, Isa Genzken and Pierre Huyghe.

Jeremy Strick, the director of the sculpture center, said that the virtues of Baghramian’s work were particularly evident amid the social isolation of the pandemic. “After these many months of reduced personal contact with beloved people, places and things,” Strick said in a statement, “it was of the utmost importance to the jury to champion an artist who deals in realms of the physical — the tangible — and Nairy Baghramian’s work stood out for its deep commitment to the object-based traditions of sculpture.”



Nairy Baghramian’s “Knee and Elbow” (2020) at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Mass.

The artist Phyllida Barlow, one of nine jurors who made the selection, highlighted Baghramian’s way of engaging with the history of sculpture. “Baghramian’s visual language is rooted in traditions of sculptural form and shape,” she said in a statement, “but she transforms those traditions into profoundly personal relationships with diverse references — from the architectural to the anthropomorphic.”

Baghramian explained that she is especially pleased to win an award that doesn’t pit artist against artist. “What I like about the prize is that it’s not a competition, it’s not a visible competition between the artists,” she said in an interview last week. “It’s discreet and it’s beautiful how the jury members do their homework behind the scenes.”

On a practical level, the award is also welcome because it buys Baghramian time, an essential ingredient of her practice. “It needs time to produce, it needs time to struggle,” she said. That is why a substantial financial infusion is so helpful. “The production of sculpture doesn’t just fall from the heavens,” she added. “You work for it, and it needs support.



Celeste Nazeli Snowber (Photo credit Chris Randle)

A CONVERSATION WITH...

Celeste Nazeli Snowber

Writer, Dancer and Choreographer

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN / VANCOUVER, Canada — Celeste Nazeli Snowber, PhD, is a performer, poet, professor, speaker, dancer, writer and award-winning educator. She is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada, author of books on dance, art and poetry as well as numerous chapters and articles in scholarly books and journals. Her books include *Embodied prayer* and *Embodied inquiry: Writing, living and being through the body*. She is author of three collections of poems, *Wild tourist: Instructions to a wild tourist from the divine feminine* and co-author of *Blue Waiting* and *The Marrow of Longing*, which explores her Armenian identity. Celeste creates site-specific performance and has been the Artist in Residence in the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden creating full-length performances connecting poetry and dance out of each season. Celeste also creates one-woman shows integrating voice, comedy, and dance and has performed across North America and Internationally in a variety of venues, including concerts, galleries, museums, conferences and outdoor spaces. She can be found at www.celestesnowber.com.

Celeste, I first read about you and your poems in *Ararat Quarterly* in 2005. Then I included your short bio in my study *Armenians in World Choreography*. I am sure, it is high time — even late — to introduce Armenians worldwide to their compatriot. Poetry and dance are theoretically similar, but you prove them being practically similar too. How do they correlate in your artistic world?

I see writing and poetry as both emerging from the body. My work is contextualized within embodied ways of inquiry, and I am dedicated to writing in ways that I dance. Therefore, I want rhythm, poetry, movement, pause, and vitality to enter the language of my writing, as they also inhabit my dance. I often write after I dance, and my poetry comes into my dance through speaking and dancing at the same time. I often interpret my poems through contemporary dance, voicing them as I move. I see both these art forms as beautiful companions and inspirations to each other.

see SNOWBER, page 15

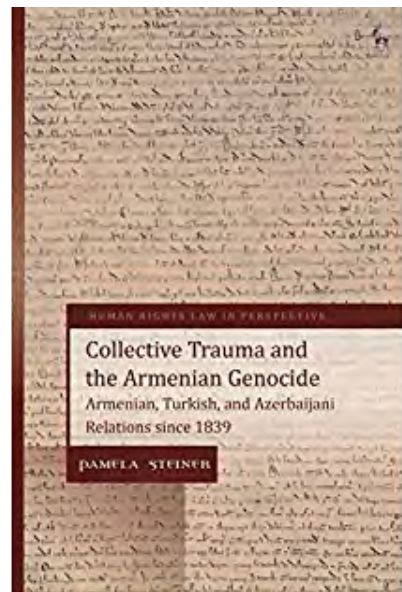
Books

The Armenian Genocide: Can Conciliation Replace Denial?

By Harold Takooshian

Even within the long and tortuous literature on the genocide of Armenians in 1915, this is a timely new volume that stands out in at least three important ways. First, it is decidedly even-handed, aiming to understand and reconcile the differing views of Turks, Azeris, and Armenians. Second, it is strikingly multidisciplinary, drawing on concepts from many fields. Third, author Pamela Steiner has a long and distinguished track record in past mediations since the 1980s, including German-Jewish and Israeli-Palestinian mediations before her “Armenian-Turkish relationship work” (xxi).

Steiner is a Harvard-based mediator, clinical psychologist, psychohistorian, and (not least) the great-granddaughter of esteemed U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Henry Morgenthau (who did so much to try to reconcile Armenians with the



Review of Pamela Steiner’s *Collective Trauma and the Armenian Genocide: Armenian, Turkish, and Azerbaijani Relations Since 1839* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2021, Human Rights Law in Perspective series), ISBN 978-1-50993-483-6, pages 334, hardcover, £81.00

Turkish government in 1915). An expert on trauma, Steiner “decided to write this book when I believed I had a fresh and useful perspective to share” (xvi). She starts with this question posed by noted Turkish historian Halil Berkay in 2005: “How can we liberate the present from being captive, in bondage, to the ghosts of 1915?” She adds: “My book as a whole seeks to address this problem” (xv).

The 18 chapters appear in four parts. First, after a lengthy introduction detailing the long gestation of

see STEINER, page 17

ARTS & CULTURE

George Chakoian

A Musician for the Ages

By Harry Kezelian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

LINCOLN, R.I. — As we pulled up to the well-kept, unassuming 1950s-style ranch, my driver announced: “this is the House that George built.” Getting out of the car, I stared up at the home, which was as well-constructed as one could hope, but did show the marks of a personal design. “You built this yourself?” I asked. “Well, I had someone do the brickwork,” George replied. Nobody’s perfect, I suppose.

George Chakoian is 97 years old and still lives with his wife of more than 70 years, Mary, in the house he built in here. Down the street is a house his younger brother Jack once lived in before moving to North Providence. Jack passed away earlier this year at age 95. By now you have realized that 97-year-old George was the driver in the first sentence. I was supposed to meet with George to interview him, but when I asked for directions to his home, he insisted on picking me up.

George is one of the last of a breed of Armenians from the first generation born in America, who embody what was great about the Greatest Generation. His late brother Jack could have been described in the same manner. Both were WWII veterans; George served in the Air Force in World War II and worked for the government as an aerospace engineer for over 50 years after graduating from



Ararat Orchestra, early 1960s (L to R: Costa Provas, Diran DerMarderosian, Harry Papazian, Jack Chakoian, Carl Narsasian, George Chakoian)

the Rhode Island School of Design. He and Mary live by themselves with no assistance, and their home is the picture of the American Dream. Military ribbons, pictures with Rhode Island Senator Jack Reed, and a Gontag from the Catholicos of All Armenians adorn the walls of the family room; an award recognizing Chakoian as an inductee of the Rhode Island Aviation Hall of Fame sits in the dining room under wedding pictures of his daughters; a baby grand piano and an oud can be found in the living room, the 1950s décor of which is in impossibly pristine condition. And he still drives.

When I visited Providence two years ago, George’s brother, Jack, 93 at the time, also insisted on driving. Jack Chakoian was an interior decorator for some 50 years and owned his own business, RI Decorators in Cranston. Aside from being a successful businessman, Jack was a fixture at St. Sahag and Mesrob Church in Providence, attending every function and Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) dance (often leading the line even in his 90s), showing up to Divine Liturgy every Sunday, and acting as a general pillar of the community.

A self-described “gym rat,” Jack was known for staying in excellent shape his entire life — one of the more popular stories about him was how he would play basketball with ACYOA members who were in their 20s when he was well into his 50s, and more than keep up.

A World War II veteran like his brother, Jack had served his time in the Navy, and was honored at the North Providence Town Hall in 2014, where he spoke as the Armenian flag was raised in honor of the 99th anniversary of the Ar-



George Chakoian with oud once owned by his teacher, Harry Hasekian

menian Genocide. Jack spoke about his parents’ survival story as well as growing up in the early Armenian-American community, which can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIYsOzmh2IM&t=1s>

Jack’s passing on this past June 30 was a loss not only for his beloved large family (he was a great-great-grandfather) but also the Rhode Island Armenian community who knew him as a passionate, engaged, avuncular figure that was always ready to support everything that went on in the Sts. Sahag and Mesrob church and community.

George was just as involved in the church as Jack was, if not more so. Both brothers worked together in the 1970s to raise money for the parish through organizing bingo nights, Jack being dispatched to other New England churches to learn how it was done. Ultimately over \$500,000 was raised for Sts. Sahag – Mesrob. George served as Diocesan delegate from Providence for many years as well as being Secretary of the Diocesan Council. The Primate would invite him as part of a select group of Armenian-Americans to greet visiting VIPs, such as President Levon Ter-Petrossian on his first US visit. The honor continued even after George was no longer on the Council.

Love For Music

Another thing that kept George and Jack together was their love of Armenian music. George is most likely the oldest living Armenian oud player in the world and led the New England Ararat Orchestra for 56 years. Two years in, his brother Jack joined the band playing saxophone. The core of the band formed by George, Jack, and clarinetist



Ararat Orchestra in later years (L to R: Myron Kizirian, George Chakoian, Carl Narsasian, Jack Chakoian)

Carl Narsasian were together longer than almost any similar group, rivalled perhaps only by the original Vosbikian Band and the Kef Time Band, depending on how you count years played together.

The band claimed to have played over 1,200 weddings, mostly Armenian, but also Greek, Arab, Assyrian, and “one Irish wedding.” They also made three 78 rpm records (singles) and three LPs, in the early 60s: “Harem Twist” (a marketing idea to capitalize on the Twist dance craze),

“Near East After Hours” which pictured the band before an Armenian feast at the local Seventh Veil restaurant, and “Next Stop Near East.” The albums, which are typical of the Armenian-American band sound of the 1950s and early 1960s, stand out for their strong orchestration and their unique choice of repertoire, incorporating Armenian and Turkish kef standards, reworked Sayat-Nova material, Armenian childrens’ folk songs like “Lorig” and “Garmir Kini, Anoush Kini” and then the offbeat songs that only the Ararat Band played. The latter included the “Dolma Song” and “Kogh Berber.” These two songs, George relates, were picked up by the band’s drummer and vocalist, the late Diran DerMarderosian, on a trip to Syria and Lebanon, where he learned them from Armenian taxicab drivers! A YouTube video of Jack Chakoian singing the Dolma Song at a Providence picnic in 2004 (viewable here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH1H0ZC6RCM>) got over 35,000 hits, and has made it back to Beirut.

For a genre that tends to be male-dominated, George, originally a violin player, took a liking to the oud from an unusual source: his mother. Though father Daniel Chakoian was a proud Armenian from Palu’s Khoshmat village, it was their mother, Margaret, an Amasia native who had a love for Armenian folk music and sang often in the house. Margaret had two female Armenian friends who came visiting often, and both of them played the oud. The three would sit and have their tea, George says, as his mother’s two friends would play their ouds, and all three women would sing, Margaret and the one friend in Armenian and the other friend in Turkish. Women oud players were more common than many people are aware, however it seems they generally played in private settings like this rather than in public.

George mentions the early immigrants’ fondness for Turkish songs as a matter of course. His father was a survivor of the Hamidian massacre and his mother of the Genocide of 1915, but it was part of the music they grew up with, and nobody at the time seemed to have a problem with it, other than a few hotheads who were usually members of the ARF. George’s father Daniel, on the other hand, was an ADL member who was responsible for another Chakoian record — George has subscribed to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* since the inception of the paper in 1932. His father bought him a subscription when he was only 8 years old.

Once George decided he wanted to play the oud, he looked for a teacher. He asked the oudist in a band that was visiting from Worcester, and the man told him “I don’t give lessons, but I know who does.” He gave George the name of Watertown’s Harry Hasekian, who just happened to be one of the greatest Armenian immigrant musicians in the country. Hasekian, a master violinist born in Marash, was an expert in Middle Eastern classical music and had further refined his craft at the Boston Conservatory. He had cut records with Kanuni Garbis Bakirgian and performed in concert with Oudi Hrant Kenkulian on his visits to the United States. Hasekian was also an accomplished oudist. But there was another hitch: when George approached Hasekian, he was told “I don’t give lessons, because I only teach by notes” (most American born oudists then and now prefer playing by ear, as folk musicians.) George, who had had some violin lessons, doggedly replied, “well, I read music.” Hasekian agreed to mentor him.

After a couple of years studying with Hasekian, George was ready to start his own group. But their friendship continued. In the late 1950s, Hasekian visited Istanbul with musician friends and searched the music shops for high-quality ouds. They returned with an elaborate Arab-made instrument that was said to have been built for an Egyptian king. Two years later, Hasekian passed away and his family decided to gift the prized oud to George, who had been his favorite student. He still has it.

In 1954, George started the New England Ararat Band with a clarinet player and a drummer. The original clarinet player was replaced by Carl Narsasian and the band went through multiple changes in the rhythm section over the years. Playing jobs all over New England, George interacted with the other musicians of his era. New York oudist Chick Ganimian was a houseguest. The Vosbikian Band were well known to the Chakoians and George particularly had a friendship with oudist Sam Vosbikian. But Jack Chakoian was the heart and soul of the band. George says he never particularly asked Jack to join, but there he was with his saxophone. George reminisced that Jack used to have Armenian music on everywhere he went, and would always turn it on as soon as he got in the car. After discussing his successful career, community involvement, and music, I asked “How will you remember your brother?” George just smiled, thought, and then replied, “he was a *keffi*.” Nothing could have been more simple.



ARTS & CULTURE

Celeste Nazeli Snowber: Writer, Dancer and Choreographer

SNOWBER, from page 13

You once said: “When we can open up to the body, we can open up to the heart.” But before that perhaps we should open the mind?

I think the mind, body and heart are interconnected and if we open one, we can open the other. However little attention has been given to opening the body, which I believe is deeply connected to intuition, trauma, healing and shifting into new ways of being, reflecting and perceiving. I want a mind with body and a body with mind. And of course, heart, always.

It was interesting to find out you studied also hula dancing — a Polynesian dance form accompanied by chant or song.

A big piece of my own dance practice is site-specific performance in the natural world. I feel the creation is a place to listen to what emerges and I am in co-creation with the trees, sky, sea, and plants and integrate interpreting nature through contemporary dance, improvisation and poetry. Hula is an old tradition of dance deeply connected to the sacred and creation. It would take me a lifetime to master hula, and I find studying hula roots in indigenous ways of knowing and movements, which are compatible with my values of listening to the earth. I do not perform hula, but it supports and inspires ways of moving which I value.

They say dancers usually do not read. You are author of studies on dance. Who is the target group for studies of choreology?

My scholarship is rooted in arts-based research and embodiment, and I have not situated myself within choreological studies. I have dedicated the last twenty-five years to developing writing from the body, embodied ways of inquiry, which include dance, movement and somatics, and have links to various fields including ecology, holistic education, spirituality and dance/arts education. I often call myself a “recovering choreographer” since I do a lot of work in improvisation and mix forms of improvisation, contemporary dance, modern dance, voice, poetry and even comedy within my performance. I feel the audience for dance scholarship has increased to many more fields besides dance studies and it has been my invitation to bring dance, the body, somatics to wider audiences.

Your middle name Nazeli (gracious) hints of your Armenian roots. Each Armenian’s personal story is a part of global Armenian history. What kind of stories, geographical and cultural names and artefacts you cherish connected to the “old country”?

My mother, Grace Terzian, left Kharpert with her fa-



Celeste Snowber (Photo credit Michele Mateus)

ther and mother in 1913, right before the genocide when a baby. She was the only sibling born in Kharpert, and of course my other ancestors were killed in the genocide. I believe she had unresolved trauma her whole life that I have taken a lifetime to unpack. Here there is much difficulty of course, but there is richness in the culture which I am claiming back in my life. That is the reason I do not have many artefacts. I have a few photos, which I cherish. However, I have fragments of stories and the beauty of a food I was raised with.

Does this heritage somehow influence your dance and poetry?

Yes, very much so. There are many poems and dances I’ve created connected to, let say, grape leaves and *khatchkars*, Armenian architecture: the churches and monasteries have also always fascinated me, as I was introduced to them as a child in books. I had a one-woman show several years ago called, “Woman giving birth to a red pepper,” and I explored some of my Armenian heritage, and the

poem I wrote, “Beneath the skin of plum black,” which is about eggplant is in the show. I have been finding writing poetry is a way to excavate the fragments of my Armenian identity, to explore the difficulties, but also the exceptionally rich culture. I often say, these “fragments can hold a world.”

You have explored your Armenian-ness in your 54 poems, that compose your last collection *The Marrow of Longing*. This poetry of historical memory and identity recognition has existed among Diaspora Armenians for almost a century. How do non-Armenians perceive this kind of deeply personal and interpersonal literature, especially if they do not deal with current-day trends?

I have been absolutely fascinated that so many non-Armenians relate to this book. Many people are exploring their identity and particularly indigenous populations have a history of genocide. Many have told me that the book has given them courage to search their own troubling pasts and find the courage to connect to their own cultures as a place of healing. I thought Armenians would be most taken with this book, and some are, but what is a delight is the positive response by non-Armenians and it is also a place to share our culture and story.

The 106-year-old genocide has been an alarming presence for the Armenians, yet today we faced a new genocidal experience after the 44-day war in Armenia. As we see, nothing has been changed. Despite everything, Armenia and its people always welcome its sons and daughters. Have you ever been in your motherland? If not, you know that you will be cordially welcomed there.

I went to Armenia in 2007 and studied Armenian dance. I loved being there and I have been longing to go back ever since. I was most taken when I was in a village in Yeghegnadzor, where I felt most at home where my now friend Antoine Terjanian also lives part time. When the dancer, Ruzan, brought lavash bread out and we all danced the Kochari in the street with the village’s Armenian dancers, there I felt deeply at home. In fact, there is a poem, “One dancing heart to another,” in my latest book that speaks of this. The last lines are

*Here are my origins
a time I do not know
but have been aching for.*

I long to return to Armenia when covid restrictions change. I know my time is not done in this beloved country.

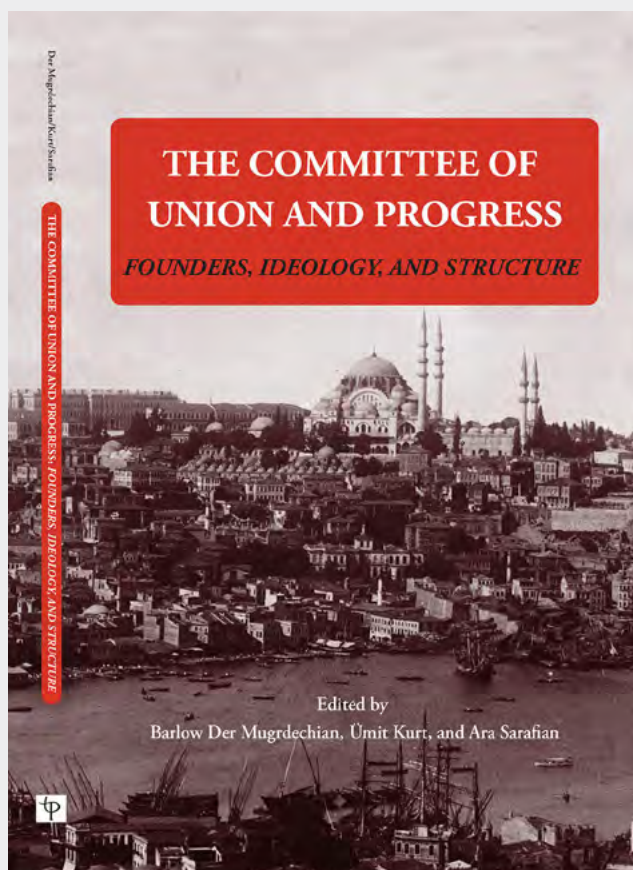
Fresno State Armenian Series Publishes New Book on Committee of Union and Progress

FRESNO — The Armenian Studies Program announced the publication of its latest book, *The Committee of Union and Progress: Founders, Ideology, and Structure*, Volume 13 in the Armenian Series of The Press at California State University, Fresno.

The book will be presented and discussed at a special virtual event to be held at 10AM (Pacific time)/1PM (New York time) on Saturday, September 25. The Zoom registration link for the event is: <http://bit.ly/armenianstudiesscupbook>. Participating in the presentation will be the editors of the book: Dr. Ümit Kurt, Ara Sarafian, and Prof. Barlow Der Muğrdechian as well as book contributors Dr. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dr. Dikran Kaligian. The Society for Armenian Studies is a co-sponsor of the presentation.

The volume includes a collection of articles that reflect on Ottoman Armenians and the Turkish nationalist movement of the Committee of Union and Progress before WWI. The articles provide new, critical insights on the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

The chapters included in this work were first presented as papers at a conference entitled “The Committee of Union and Progress: Founders, Ideology, and Structure” organized by Prof. Barlow Der Muğrdechian and Dr. Ümit Kurt, and sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program of California State University, Fresno, between October 12–13, 2018. The papers have since been edited and appear here in a single volume with a new historical introduction



and illustrations.

The contents of the book include an “Introduction,” by Ümit Kurt and articles: “The Unionist Regime: Ideology in Command,” by Raymond H. Kévorkian; “Ziya Gökalp, Duumvir,” by Hans-Lukas Kieser; “When Revolutionaries Must Govern: The Vicissitudes of ARF-CUP Relations,” by Dikran Kaligian; “The Post-Revolutionary Period in Aintab and the Curious Case of Necmeddin Bey,” by Ümit Kurt; and “Homeland and Nation Revisited: A Discourse Analysis of the Memoirs of Young Turks,” by Duygu Coşkuntuna.

“The Committee of Union and Progress present a new approach to the study of this important period when the CUP came to power,” said Prof. Barlow Der Muğrdechian, general editor of the Armenian Series. “The book will provide scholars with new insights into the political party which ruled the Ottoman Empire from 1908 through the end of World War I. The inner workings of the party are key to understanding the decision which ultimately led to the Armenian Genocide.”

Copies of *The Committee of Union and Progress* are available for purchase from: Abril Bookstore, <http://abrilbooks.com> or the National Association for Armenian Studies & Research (NAASR) Bookstore, <https://naasr.org/collections/naasr-bookstore>.

For bulk orders please contact the Armenian Studies Program, email barlowd@csufresno.edu.



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Chef Rose Nahabedian's Sou Bourek

This recipe originally appeared at *Better Homes and Gardens* (<https://www.bhg.com/recipe/sou-bourek/>).

Michelin-starred chef Carrie Nahabedian credits her beloved Grandma Rose Nahabedian from Chicago for teaching her about Armenian cooking and preparation. "Our grandmother cooked every day," she says. "She made her own yogurt, her own bread, her own phyllo. I believe that our moms and grandmas are the people who learn and pass on these family food traditions to their children." She has carefully preserved her family's recipes, including this version of Sou Bourek, a delicious layered egg noodle and cheese bake. (See: Barbara Hansen's December 1999 interview, "Something About Carrie" at: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1999-dec-08-fo-41602-story.html>).

Carrie began cooking in high school, when she would go to her Grandma Rose's house every week and learn a new dish until she had cooked through her grandmother's entire repertoire. She would measure her grandmother's hand to learn the amounts of salt or olive oil to be used in a recipe. "My mother Helen cooks so tremendously, and my Grandma Rose, who passed away in 1991, was known in Chicago as the queen of Armenian cooking." Carrie learned how to make pilaf, yalanchi and other dishes from Grandma Rose, and has clipped recipes from both women to the back of her favorite Armenian cookbook (*Armenian Cooking Today* by Alice Antreassian [St. Vartan Press, 1989]). "Everyone in our family cooks and entertains with great style and flourish. I don't like shortcuts or not putting your best foot forward all the time."

Growing up Carrie was influenced in her cooking skills by her mother and by celebrity chef Julia Child. She described watching Child as "like watching an artist painting." She began her culinary career with a three-year apprenticeship at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Chicago. She then moved to Atlantic City to become assistant chef at the Resorts Casino Hotel when it first opened. Starting off as a cook at Chicago's Ritz-Carlton, she quickly rose through the industry ranks, eventually mastering fine dining in both the hotel setting and at iconic Chicago restaurants like Le Perroquet, Le Francais and Sinclair's.

Carrie was a protégé of Jean Banchet at Le Francais, Jovan Trbojevic at Le Perroquet, and Fernand Gutierrez at the Four Seasons. She was Chef de Cuisine of La Tour at the Park Hyatt, and served as Executive Chef for Four Seasons in Chicago, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles.

After leaving the Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills, Carrie returned to her native Chicago to open NAHA in 2000 with her cousin and business partner, Michael Nahabedian. NAHA garnered them a James Beard Award. "We were blessed to have such great support from the Armenian community not only in Chicago, but across America. Many times, we hosted the Archbishop's appeal for the Diocese," says Carrie.

"NAHA had eight consecutive Michelin one-star awards before closing in 2018 after 18 years. We held a successful NAHA promotion at the Four Seasons Istanbul at Sultanhamet, where we met many people from the now modern city of Sivas, home of our grandparents," says Carrie. "It was a memorable experience cooking in Turkey."

In September 22, 2009, Carrie was inducted into the Chicago Culinary Museum and Chefs Hall of Fame with Mayor Richard M. Daley declaring that day as "Car-

rie Nahabedian Day in Chicago." She has served as a longstanding board member of Green City Market, Chicago's largest farmer's market. In 2013, Carrie opened Brindille in Chicago with her cousin and business partner Michael Nahabedian.

Carrie and Michael created Kostali by NAHA at The Gwen Hotel featuring coastal Mediterranean cuisine, in 2019. While NAHA served to highlight her Armenian roots, Brindille's refined Parisian fare celebrates the Nahabedian cousins' favorite spots in Paris. Michael's brother, Tom Nahabedian oversaw its architecture and interior design. He is also a James Beard winner, earning the 2016 Outstanding Restaurant Design award for his work with Brindille. "Grandma Rose was a cherished grandmother and teacher to me, my cousins Michael and Tom, and to my sisters, Cathy and Chris who also work at the restaurants," adds Carrie.

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 medium eggs
- Nice pinch of kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 – 2 cups all-purpose flour
- Butter, softened
- 1 2-pound brick Muenster or Monterrey Jack cheese, shredded
- 1 pound small curd cottage cheese
- 4 medium eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1/2 cup melted butter

PREPARATION:

For dough: Crack the three eggs into a large bowl and beat with a whisk attachment until fluffy, about 4 minutes. Add a nice pinch of kosher salt and one tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil; beat one minute more. By hand, stir in 1 1/2 cups of the flour. (Dough should be sticky.) On a lightly floured surface knead in more of the remaining 1/2 cup flour until it is a soft, silky dough and makes a smooth ball. Divide dough into six equal portions and shape into balls. Place them, not touching, on a sheet pan or the counter; cover with a towel and let rest for at least two hours.

For noodles: Bring a large pot of salted water to boiling. Using additional flour on the work surface as needed, roll out each dough portion into a thin round, approximately 10 inches in diameter. (It is a very fragile dough; use more flour as needed.) Plunge a dough round into boiling water for 30 seconds. Use a slotted spoon to carefully remove and plunge into cold water. Pat dry with paper towels; set aside. "I like to drizzle them with a bit of olive oil to prevent sticking," Carrie says. Repeat with remaining rounds.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously butter a 13x9-inch ovenproof dish. In a very large bowl, mix shredded cheese and cottage cheese together with the four beaten eggs. Divide cheese mixture into two bowls; stir parsley into one.

Place two noodles into the prepared dish, overlapping slightly; brush with some of the melted butter. Spread the cheese-parsley mix over the noodles. Top with two more noodles. Brush with some of the remaining melted butter. Spread plain cheese mixture over noodles. Top with the remaining noodles and brush with remaining butter. Dot the top of the dish with additional pieces of butter. Bake 40 to 50 minutes or until the top is golden brown and filling is bubbly. Let cool before cutting into squares. Serves 8.

Mock Sou Bourek Recipe:

Omit steps 1 and 2 and cook 16 ounces dried wide egg noodles in lightly salted boiling water according to package directions. Drain. Layer with cheese mixtures as directed, using one-third of the noodles in each layer and drizzling with melted butter before topping with cheese mixture. Bake as directed.

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Brindille: 534 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL, 60654. For reservations, call: (312) 595-1616 (website: brindille-chicago.com). Social media: Facebook: Carrie Nahabedian or NAHA Restaurant or Brindille; Twitter: @cnaha or @naha-chgo or @brindille-chgo

For Armenian recipes by Nahabedian, go to: <https://www.jamesbeard.org/chef/carrie-nahabedian>

James Beard Award-winning chef Nahabedian has visited 80 countries, principalities and islands. She says journeys have helped her elevate her cooking. Often-times she finds ways to give back to people in other countries through philanthropy and mentoring. See her video at: <https://interactive.wttw.com/chefs-off-the-clock/carrie-nahabedian>. For Carrie's Armenian Shish Kebab and Armenian Rice Pilaf recipes, go to: <https://www.jamesbeard.org/chef/carrie-nahabedian>

For "Carrie Nahabedian, The Michelin-starred chef, 62, on post-riot rehabbing, the two types of line cooks, and the best advice she ever got," *Chicago Magazine*, October 2020, go to: <https://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/October-2020/Carrie-Nahabedian/>

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ARTS & CULTURE

The Armenian Genocide: Can Conciliation Replace Denial?

STEINER, from page 13

this volume, chapters one through three take the reader on a deep dive into the psychiatric nature of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), its causes, and the consequences. Steiner depicts the many psychiatric aftereffects of both individual and collective trauma, including despair, withdrawal, denial, guilt, anger, helplessness, as well as desires for revenge, justice, or scapegoating. Steiner offers four very similar examples of collective trauma in four diverse regions: Africa (Rwanda), Europe (Hungary), the Middle East (Israel/Palestine), and East Asia (Indonesia).

It should be noted here that once the Ottoman Turks toppled Constantinople in 1453, the Turkish “millet” system was “Jim Crow on steroids” for five centuries. Non-Muslim minorities became “dhimmis” (“protected peoples”) with limited rights who owed special taxes to the Sultan. On YouTube today, one can easily find five-minute clips of Elia Kazan’s powerful 1963 film *America! America!* with stark images of this millet system in which non-Muslim minorities carefully heeded their Turkish overlords.

Two, chapters four through nine explore



Dr. Pamela Steiner

200 years of Ottoman history, mentioning the tangled roots of Turkish society and the changing role of non-Muslims. Though Armenians had occupied Anatolia for thousands of years, they were now subject to the Ottoman Turks who saw Anatolia as their own homeland. Steiner masterfully recounts the decline of the Sultan, the rising clash of Turkish and Armenian nationalists, and the “emotional roller coaster” with dramatic stories across these 200 years. One chapter focuses on a psychobiography on the five “Young Turk” leaders who (around 1912) secretly concocted a murderous solution to their growing “Armenian Question.” Despite the noble efforts of Turkey’s heroic U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, the genocide swiftly and savagely unfolded, starting on April 24, 1915.

Three, chapters ten through 15 shift from Turkey to the Transcaucasus after 1900 and the more local relations between Azeris and Armenians after the sudden fall of Tsar Nicholas in 1917. Under a faltering Russian hegemony, the three fledgling Transcaucasian republics—Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan—endured further trauma as they barely survived the onslaught of the Ottoman armies.

Finally, chapters 16 through 18 focus on the psychological importance of meaning-making, and how this is impaired by collective trauma among both Armenians and Turks. Steiner describes her experiences with ill-fated efforts like the U.S. State Department’s Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission in 2001. Her concluding chapter suggests a way forward for Azeris and Armenians in the current struggle over the disputed border region of Artsakh. She writes: “Together we can find the strength to grieve, and the awareness and will to change course” (309).

Critique

Would Ambassador Morgenthau be proud to see this book by his great-granddaughter? No doubt. Like him, Steiner combines great abilities with a determination to replace conflict with peace. Also, like he did in 1915, she is eager to do the impossible by brokering peace between Turks and Armenians in 2020. For over a decade, Steiner personally worked with key Turkish and Armenian leaders in this effort, who encouraged Steiner’s volume. Its bibliography of over 300 sources is impressively diverse in several ways: It includes historical archives; primary and secondary sources in at least three languages; and draws from many distinct specialties—psychohistorians like Vamik Volkan, psychiatrists like Bessel van der Kolk, historians like Richard Hovannissian, mediators like Herbert Kelman, and psychologists like Ani Kalayjian. Not least of all, it fully blends three perspectives: Turkish, Azeri, and Armenian.

Steiner’s psychohistorical approach is especially valuable in explaining why genocide occurred in 1915, why hatred still festers, and what needs to be done now to end it. To achieve harmony among Armenians, Turks, and Azeris, four related issues should be confronted.

The first issue is ghosts. When Berktaç refers to the “ghosts” of 1915, how disrespectful is this? All of us, Turk and Armenian, naturally cherish the memory of our dear ancestors, including those children and families who suffered violence and death. In my own family, we all loved our dear Uncle Vahram Sofian (1899-1969) who, “on the road” at age 15, had to bury his own mother Berjuhi as he marched on. Is dear Berjuhi one of 1.5 million unwanted ghosts who we must now exorcise to achieve harmony?

The second issue is “good Turks.” More than most nations, there has always been a huge rift between the Turkish people and their government, which Steiner’s book confirms. Detailed accounts of the genocide are replete with “good Turks” who did not support their government’s murderous policies and were largely responsible for those Armenians who survived. In my own family, my displaced grandmother Surpuhi and her two daughters were personally protected from harm for three years by a poor but godly village Imam, who bewailed his government’s misbehavior. Later, when my mother Dorothy left Istanbul in 1934, she deeply missed her warm and caring Muslim neighbors. Today, while Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s government remains steadfast in its denial, we see many if not most Turks increasingly and openly sympathetic to accept the genocide for what it was—an acceptance that bodes well for future conciliation.

The third issue is DNA. During the chaos of 1915-1923, countless Armenian children were abducted and raised by Turkish families, some unaware of their Armenian ancestry—much like the Hamshin (Islamized Armenians). As new DNA testing becomes popular, thousands of Turks are now discovering their Armenian ancestry. Can this trend have any other impact, except to narrow the gap between Armenians and Turks?

The fourth issue is forgiveness. Armenians are surely proud to be part of the world’s first Christian nation, and forgiveness is certainly a foundational tenet of Christianity. But how can one forgive someone who denies any wrongdoing? Clearly, the current waning of denial makes forgiveness possible.

Since Steiner’s volume appeared in the past year, two momentous events give it

great new importance. First, on the downside, Recep Erdoğan zealously supported “Operation Iron Fist,” the massive Azeri invasion into Nagorno-Karabagh on September 27, 2020. Many fear that Erdoğan hopes to finish the job the Young Turks began in 1915 and finally unite these two Turkic nations by eliminating that small land area of Armenia that currently divides them. Second, on the upside, many applauded Joseph R. Biden for finally, on April 24, 2021, uttering the “G” word, making history as the first U.S. President since 1915 to use the forbidden word “genocide,” despite immense pressure from Ankara.

The stakes are suddenly higher than ever. Just as denial is visibly declining among the Turkish citizenry, the government of

Armenia is now reeling at the prospect of annihilation, as leaders in Ankara and Baku revive their pan-Turan ambitions. What can be done to replace conflict with peace in this turbulent region? There is no better guide than Steiner’s powerful new book, which is now a must-read for those involved in this centuries-old drama.

Harold Takooshian, PhD, has been on the faculty of Fordham University since 1975, where he is Professor of Psychology, Urban Studies, and Organizational Leadership. He has done oral histories with dozens of Armenian migrants who came to the U.S. before and after the 1915 genocide in Anatolia. This review originally appeared in Clio’s Psyche, v 28, Number 1, Fall 2021.

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 25 — Amaras will hold its annual Walkathon in support of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. Registration and Check In: 10:30 am – 11:00 am. Walk: Starts at 11:00 am. Start Location: Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACEC) 47 Nichols Avenue, Watertown. End Location: Saltonstall Park at Watertown Square. Registration Fee: \$25 for Adults; \$10 for Students and Children (Children need to register to participate in the Walk). Online Registration is highly recommended. For more information: call 617-331-0426 or email ne@abmdr.com

OCTOBER 3 — International Food Festival: Sample authentic cuisine from nine different countries. Sunday, 12 pm to 3 pm, Holy Trinity Armenian Church 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge.

OCTOBER 4 — St. James Men’s Club Monthly Dinner Meeting with speaker John R. Peterson. Topic: the current Real Estate Market. Losh Kebab and Kheyra Dinner. 6 p.m. Social Hour, 7 p.m. Dinner. \$18 per person. Ladies welcome. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information e-mail mensclub@stthagop.com.

OCTOBER 6 — LET’S MEET AT THE PARK! Wednesday, 10.30 a.m. In collaboration with Age Friendly Boston Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. RSVP hello@ArmenianHeitagePark.org

OCTOBER 10 — Armenian Business Network Presents Boston premiere of the film “Gate to Heaven” Sunday, 2:30 p.m. Director Jivan Avetisyan will be present. West Newton Cinema, West Newton. Purchase tickets online. Tickets \$25. COVID-19 prevention measures will be strictly enforced in accordance to Massachusetts Department of Health Advisory and Guidelines. For more info about the event, please contact armenianbusinessnetwork@gmail.com.

OCTOBER 16 — St. James 74th Annual Bazaar – Noon to 6 pm. Armenian Food and Pastries by PRE-ORDER ONLY. Enjoy OUTDOOR SEATING under our large tent (No indoor seating). Browse our St. James Marketplace! St. James Artisans Craft Table, Armenian Items, and more. Online Silent Auction. \$100 Raffle. For full details and to order meals and pastries starting Oct. 1st, visit www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar, or call the Church office. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or info@stthagop.com.

NOVEMBER 14 — GIVING THANKS: TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION, Sunday, 2 p.m. In collaboration with Boston Children’s Choir & The Greenway Conservancy Meet & Greet. Enjoy the Boston Children’s Chorus Walk the Labyrinth. Tie a Ribbon on the Wishing Tree RSVP hello@ArmenianHeitagePark.org

DECEMBER 19 — CANDLELIT VIRTUAL LABYRINTH WALK: IN PEACE & HARMONY, 4.30 p.m. Meet & Greet. Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth. Wish on The Wishing Tree. Hot Chocolate. Individually-wrapped cookies. RSVP hello@ArmenianHeitagePark.org

NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 25 — The TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group Presents an open air concert with Huyser Music Ensemble. Saturday. Save the date. Details to follow.

NOVEMBER 13 — Save the Date: Saturday, 12 Vocations, Fulfilling the Promise of St. Nersess Seminary. Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and the vocations of the first 12 priests who graduated from St. Nersess and St. Vladimir’s Seminaries and were ordained. This is the first in a series of events to recognize the alumni of St. Nersess, both ordained and lay, who are in service to the Armenian Church, in any capacity. The celebratory dinner will be held at the Old Tappan Manor in Old Tappan, N.J. For more info, go to www.stnersess.edu.

THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

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COMMENTARY

Commentary

Sobering Reflections upon the 30th Anniversary Of Independence of the Republic of Armenia



**By Dr. Arshavir
Gundjian C.M.**

Armenian republic.

Since then, September 21 has become a landmark date for the Armenian people across the world, with independence anniversary celebrations organized, small or large, with legitimate pride and joy. Indeed, after several centuries of a most difficult history, at the tail of which Armenians had also become the victims of the devastating first largescale genocide of modern history in 1915, and after a last stretch including a brief first republic followed by some seven decades as part of the Soviet Union, Armenia in 1991 appeared to be finally entering a promising period of true independence.

History and Hopes

On that date Armenia was still facing enormous humanitarian and political challenges. It had just survived a devastating earthquake in 1988. The collapse of the Soviet Union had immediately created an intense adversarial relationship with neighboring Azerbaijan and Turkey due to the historic decision of the Armenians of Artsakh, who had also declared their legitimate right for independence, leading to a war of liberation.

Despite such trying concerns, in 1991 the Armenian world was upbeat. The Republic of Armenia, as the continuation of the Soviet Republic of Armenia, had inherited quite a strong infrastructure. Indeed, in spite of the repressive communist regime, during the preceding seventy years, Armenia had become a truly all-inclusive state, respectable in all its aspects, and to be reckoned with. Armenia had an impressive industry. In the world of science and research it had developed and acquired an impressive and respectable position at the highest international levels. As one of the most productive military development regions of the defunct USSR, it had acquired top-level military knowledge, experience, and abilities. As for the Armenian diaspora, some hundred years after the genocide, it too had become a vast mass of multimillions with impressive human and financial resources, which stood both overwhelmed and excited by the sudden independence of their homeland. It was ready, willing, and eager to help its motherland in any way possible.

Now, after we fast-forwarded to the 30th anniversary of independence, we can scan rapidly through the years where Armenia, as a totally independent country, had full control of its own destiny and had no one but itself to take credit for its achievements and also equally to be blamed for its mistakes and shortcomings.

To the average Armenian, up until the devastating second Artsakh war which started in September 2020, Armenia seemed to be working hard and appeared to be reasonably successful in developing itself as an emerging young country. It certainly went through some tumultuous political upheavals and government changes. Levon Der Bedrossian was replaced by Robert Kocharyan who in turn was succeeded by the invincible looking Serzh Sargsyan, and the latter gave in with surprising swiftness to the “All liberating Velvet Revolution” of Nikol Pashinyan, which inspired initially exhilarating hopes.

By getting rid of rampant corruption, as in other former Soviet republics, Armenia was finally on its way to become a true modern nation that would make any Armenian proud and comfortable in which to invest and even live. Indeed, due to the prevailing notorious corruption, the country had unfortunately already been depleted of a sizable portion of its talented population.

Artsakh and Security

During the more or less normally expected course of life adopted by Armenia, the Artsakh issue stood as the permanent elephant in the room. Subconsciously, Artsakh was pictured in the minds of Armenians as an unquestionably Armenian land where Armenians developed successful businesses and lived in paradisiac natural settings. The permanent conflict and skirmishes with Azerbaijan on the borders had become a nuisance which had simply to be lived with.

There was not even an inkling of concern about Armenia’s security which almost certainly also implied the security of Artsakh, the inseparable part of the New Armenia! Such a feeling of security was the result of the almost careless confidence ev-

ery Armenian had acquired, having been led misled into believing that the military strength of the Armenian army was “the strongest of the region.”

The 44-day catastrophe of the Artsakh war suddenly pulled the cover off the enormously sad realities of the New Armenia!

It has become painfully evident that in the course of the 30 years of independence, all successive governments had been irresponsibly careless and guilty in neglecting to consider the permanent upgrading of Armenia’s military readiness to combat, which should have been their very first and top priority.

It should be evident to anyone claiming the responsibility of being Armenia’s governing authority that the country is geographically surrounded by neighbors the majority of which are its relentless hostile historical archenemies and aim at its complete destruction. Therefore, just as important as bread, butter and water, the maintenance of a top quality army is a top priority to be secured at all times and at the cost of any sacrifice.

While keeping proportions in perspective, the example of Israel surrounded by similarly threatening hostile neighbors offers an obvious lesson the Armenians need to emulate in many respects. Since its embryonic and difficult beginnings as an independent state, in 1948, the entire Israeli population and nation has lived in a state of permanent military readiness. All men and women are militarily trained there – why not do the same in Armenia? Israel has built over the years the world’s top grade military industry.

There is no need to expect that much of Armenia. However, why did Armenia not make its utmost effort to maintain what it had inherited from the Soviet regime, and relentlessly develop further its capabilities, especially in the relevant fields of lasers, drones and other relevant weaponry? These are only a few questions of which the answers point embarrassingly to the utter irresponsibility of Armenia’s succeeding governing circles and the so-called elite, where drinking the traditional “genatz” shots on Armenia’s independence days was considered enough to give a feeling of security to the country.

We in the diaspora are not blameless. We have been taken in by this deeply irresponsible attitude in Armenia. In retrospect, up until and even during the 44-day war, we too, sheeplike, expected that Armenia’s army was capable of and actually was effectively conducting the war victoriously against the Turkish-backed Azerbaijani aggressors.

The sudden and catastrophic Armenian capitulation of November 9, 2020 has unveiled an entirely different and sad reality. Suddenly a chain of fundamental flaws in the Armenian state have revealed its true image. Actually, to this date, the full reality of all that was involved in the devastating defeat has not been revealed because of the absence of a credible process of investigation. Furthermore, after almost a full year since the defeat, and a miserably ill-prepared general election that, as was expected, resulted in a totally dysfunctional National Assembly, Armenia as a country and Armenians as a nation, face dangerously threatening existential realities that can not be ignored.

As we approach the 30th independence anniversary date of September 21, given the balance sheet of the past thirty years as sketched above, informed and concerned Armenians, whether living in Armenia, in Artsakh or in the diaspora, are certainly not in a mood for celebrations. Instead, they have the most sobering serious thoughts and unconditional demands.

The current political landscape in Armenia is chaotic and unquestionably self-destructive, inside as well as outside the parliament. The so-called opposition forces of Kocharyan/ Armenian Revolutionary Federation/ Sargsyan have proven to be at the peak of political destructive irresponsibility, with not even the shade of any constructive proposals as an alternative to those proposed by Pashinyan’s majority government. The latter, which was pushed lately to the level of a majority only as a negative vote against the previous regimes, continues to act with the same arrogance and self-reliance that it had shown in its preceding reign of some three years that ended in the catastrophic defeat.

The Path Forward

The current regime has systematically avoided any effort to look for political and intellectual talent, outside its own narrow circle of friends and followers. Armenia can not afford nor tolerate such a narrow mindedness! We expressly demand of the large group of remaining political and intellectual elements of Armenia to finally step forward and take hold of the destiny of the nation. The so called “Third Force” (the so far invisible wished for political force, composed of Armenia’s experienced, serious intellectuals, politicians and professionals), wherever

continued on next page



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Turkish-American Groups Contributed \$2.2 Million to Politicians Since 2007

I came across a Turkish-American website, “tenthousandturks.org,” which is described as: “Ten Thousand

Turks Campaign.”

The website includes the combined information of five separate Turkish-American political action committees (PACs): 1) Turkish Coalition USA Political Action Committee (TC-USA PAC); 2) Turkish Coalition California Political Action Committee (TC-CAL PAC); 3) National Coalition of Turkish American Lawyers Political Action Committee, (NC-TAL PAC); 4) National Coalition of Turkish American Women Political Action Committee (NC-TAW PAC); 5) Turkish American Political Action Committee (TURKISH PAC-TX).

The website states that the “Ten Thousand Turks Campaign,” was launched on April 29, 2010. It is “dedicated to reaching out to over 10,000 Turkish-Americans and friends of Turkey willing to take a stand to support candidates that understand the value of positive US-Turkish relations.” This coalition of PACs has adopted the impossible task of fostering “positive US-Turkish relations.” The leader of Turkey, Pres. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has done a great job of undermining US-Turkish relations as well as Turkey’s relations with many other countries. I suggest that instead of wasting their hard earned money, Turkish-Americans get rid of Erdogan which will immediately improve US-Turkish relations.

The group’s website claims that the five Turkish PACs combined have raised a total of \$2,152,849 from 2007 to 2020 for US political candidates. Interestingly, the amount of contributions they have received has declined precipitously from a high of \$510,765 in 2015-16 to a low of \$202,640 in 2019-20. This may indicate that Turkish-Americans are not as hopeful about improving US-Turkish relations by contributing to political campaigns. The website does not explain how the group was able to raise money in 2007 to 2009 before it was formed in 2010.

The Turkish website also provides the amount of money raised by each of the five PACs in the 2019-20 election cycle: TC-USA PAC (\$57,500); TC-TAW PAC (\$37,750); TC-CAL PAC (\$44,490); TC-MIDWEST PAC (\$35,800); and TURKISH PAC-TX (\$27,000). Some of the groups have changed their names over the years.

Here is additional information regarding each of the five groups:

1) TC-USA PAC: This group’s fundraising declined from \$231,950 in 2009-10 to \$57,500 in 2019-20. It is headquartered in Washington, D.C. G. Lincoln McCurdy is the Treasurer and Louette Ragusa is the Custodian of Records.

2) TC-CAL PAC: This group’s fundraising declined from \$64,400 in 2015-16 to \$44,490 in 2019-20. It is headquartered in Long Beach, California. Maria Cakiraga is the Treasurer and Yelda Bartlett is the Northern California Representative.

3) NC-TAL PAC: No fundraising information is available on its own website. It

is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The PAC’s Officers & Executive Committee Members are: Doreen Edelman, President; Robert Levent Herguner, Treasurer; Aylin Acikalin; Zeliha Arslan; Yelda Bartlett; and Lawrence Cenk Laws.

4) NC-TAW PAC: No fundraising information is available on its website. It is headquartered in Washington, D.C. Tuba Firincioglu is the Treasurer and Louette Ragusa is the Custodian of Records. Louette holds the same position with the TC-USA PAC. The website claims that there are nationwide 11 Turkish elected officials in city and local governments and none at state or federal levels.

5) Turkish PAC-TX: No fundraising information is available on its website and no executives are named. The group is headquartered in Houston, Texas.

The “tenthousandturks.org” website provides the following additional details: “In the 2019-2020 election cycle, the PACs contributed to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), Congressional Black Caucus PAC (CBC PAC), and Bold PAC (Congressional Hispanic PAC).

“The PACs also contributed to three US senators, 61 candidates for the US House of Representatives, and 10 candidates for state or local races. The percentage of wins was 100% for the Senate, 98% for the House, and 50% for state and local offices. Further, the PACs were instrumental in rallying support for the 11 Turkish Americans running for public office in 2020, the largest number ever, and the three spouses of Turkish Americans for a total of 14 candidates.

“Notable successes by the PACs in the 2019-2020 election cycle were the following:

“(1) The comeback of Cong. Pete Sessions, the former Turkey Caucus Co-Chair, in winning Texas’s 17th congressional district after his loss in 2018 when he represented the 32nd district;

“(2) The election of Farrah Khan, a popular friend of Turkish Americans in southern California, as the Mayor of Irvine, California;

“(3) The election of Turkish American Aycha Sawa as the City Comptroller for Milwaukee, Wisconsin;

“(4) The reelection of Turkish American Tayfun Selen as a Freeholder (County Commissioner) of the Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholders (County Commissioners) in New Jersey;

“(5) The reelection of Ben Bartlett, spouse of Turkish American Yelda Bartlett, as a City Council Member in Berkeley, California; and

“(6) The election of Leah Ersoylu, spouse of Turkish American Sarp Ersoylu, as a Trustee of the Newport Mesa United School District in Orange County, California.”

Naturally, Turkish-Americans have the right to contribute to political campaigns in the United States like any other American. The only issue is that they are using their political outreach to spread lies about the Armenian Genocide. Their political fundraising website is full of disinformation about the Genocide committed by Ottoman Turkey against Armenians. This is something Armenian-Americans need to counter with their own “One Million Armenians Campaign.”

Reflections upon the 30th Anniversary of Independence

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it is now, hiding itself, must come out to prevent a complete collapse and loss of the Armenian nation. The current ridiculous bunch of some 25 “political parties,” which are at best just small groups of friends gathered around some central leading individuals, incapable of having any possible political impact, would have been considered as political jokes, had the nation not been at this time in an emergency state.

Ironically, already just few months after the last anticipated elections, there is again serious talk for “new anticipated elections.” If and when that happens, the foregoing sad masquerade can not and must not be tolerated to happen again. A true effective, well balanced, all inclusive “third force” must already take shape starting now, in order to take over the destiny of the nation, and form a government of “National Rescue.” The diaspora, which has remained completely isolated from the entire last political upheaval in the motherland, must be able to participate, at the very least, by providing the benefit of its politically savvy members and others with well proven track records.

The next priority to be demanded of the expected government of National Rescue, or for that matter, of any responsible government, is to immediately put in place a long overdue program for the reconstruction of the nation and the urgent pursuit of efforts to generate the vital components necessary for an independent nation to possess and rely on.

The foremost need in this process is to revamp Armenia’s badly damaged mil-

itary capabilities. That means the complete restructuring of the army to boost the moral of its fighters, as well as the initiation of a program of acquisition of up-to-date and relevant armament. The latter will require both the revival of the sadly abandoned local military industry, as well as the attempt to purchase modern material from friendly as well as simply commercially interested suppliers. Without undertaking seriously this effort, it is futile to pretend that any other nation building programs are being pursued!

Once the defense of the nation is reasonably catered to, the next vital step is to introduce serious programs for the development of Armenia’s financial, industrial, educational and cultural infrastructures. This requires credible planning with the help of well-established experts from within as well as from outside Armenia, preferably but not necessarily only Armenians. The diaspora can and must help.

The above will create stability in Armenia and will help re-establish the morale of the nation, leading to every kind of positive outcome.

In conclusion, in the wake of the tragedy that our nation just lived through over a period of nearly one year, the marking of the 30th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia can acquire a genuine significance, only if and when the entire Armenian people, extending from Armenia to Artsakh and then throughout its worldwide diaspora, expresses its unwavering expectation that those claiming the responsibility of national leadership unquestionably respect and implement the above demands.

We Must Defend and Preserve Independence

By Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II

His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, has issued a message on Armenian Independence Day, Information Services at the Mother See reported. The message reads:

“Beloved people in Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora,

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the re-establishment of our independent statehood.

Three decades ago, our people, with a united will, chose the path of rebuilding its independence, to fulfill their centuries-old desire and dream with enthusiasm and inspiration.

Our people have traversed a difficult path of state-building, facing many challenges and making great sacrifices.

With glorious victories, successes and achievements, we also had omissions, wrong processes, both in the homeland and in the international arena.

Last year our nation went through a new trial. Azerbaijan again unleashed a war against the Republic of Artsakh.

The worst consequences of the catastrophic war, the wounds that bleed every day, have created a completely new situation in the life of our people.

In our hearts is the deep pain of our losses, our fallen martyrs, captives and the missing, the anxiety of the uncertainty towards the future, but also the determination to stand up again, to shake off the disasters and troubles that have befallen us, to ensure conditions for our people to live safely and prosperously in Artsakh and Armenia.

The independence of the native country is the greatest value. Over the centuries, the Armenian Church has always kept the idea of independence awake in the souls of our children, blessed the struggles for our freedom, put everything possible in the establishment and progress of our modern independent homeland, and will continue its activity in this sacred mission.

The main meaning of the 30th anniversary of independence is to rebuild a progressive, prosperous country in love and unity.

Today, unfortunately, we often see intolerance instead of solidarity and dialogue. The problems facing our country and people demand unity, joint efforts and implementation of like-minded goals.

We must defend and preserve the independence, which was acquired at a high price, with national unity, overcoming internal and external challenges along the way of this sacred mission, because our independent state is the strongest anchor and guarantee of our existence and being.

On the occasion of the Independence Day, we extend our pontifical blessings to all our people, urging them to stand firm in the faith, to walk in God’s commandments, united around the homeland, to fulfil our vivid national desires with patriotic and fraternal love.

It is our prayer that Almighty God keep our Homeland and the world at peace, as well as grant creative and safe life for the children of my nation, today and always. Amen.”



Renewed Efforts to Settle Turkish-Armenian-Azerbaijani Relations: Challenges for Armenia and Armenians

By Davit Safaryan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

How consistent and determined is Russia while trying to re-open transportation and communications in the South Caucasus? What will Turkish-Azerbaijani political and economic expansion look like after a possible settlement with Armenia? What kind of pressure will Turkey apply in the process of establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia and re-opening roads? What arrangements relating to the South Caucasus did Russia, Turkey and Iran come to? What kind of future does the intensifying Russian-Turkish collaboration have? These questions concern Armenians activists in Armenia, Artsakh and the diaspora. Most disturbing of all is whether the attempts of settlement in the South Caucasus will lead to new controversies and divisions between Armenia and its diaspora. Answers to these questions have been sought while writing this analytical piece.

Visible Logic of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Settlement

Russia's President Putin is very consistent and determined in his endeavors to open the South Caucasus roads and other transportation means. This process is promoted based on the Declarations of November 9, 2020 and January 1, 2021 signed by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia. There is verified information that a commission headed by the deputy premiers of these three countries is actively working to prepare a regular meeting. Experienced Yerevan watchdogs closely following the settlement process during the past 30 years state that a peculiar consensus of Russia, Turkey and Iran has been outlined that is seeking some coherent or concerted economic or political benefits from the above process.

If there was nothing unexpected in Turkey's economic and political expansion in Georgia and especially in Azerbaijan, Armenia, defeated in the 44 days war all of a sudden faced the plausible prospective of being exposed to the expansion of

the Turkish-Azerbaijani tandem. Certainly reopening of communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan is promising not only for Russia, Turkey and maybe Iran, but also for Armenia. This is corroborated by high ranking Russian officials directing the trilateral negotiation process. There is information that workshops of diplomats and government officers both in Armenia and Azerbaijan are working on the drafts of the so called "Peace Agreement" between Armenia and Azerbaijan. But if such work is not disclosed and kept confidential in Armenia as it has been during the past decades, the president of Azerbaijan is making public announcements considering them to be the best propaganda exercises. However, the fact is that despite complications in the matters of border delimitation and demarcation, and despite the suffocating air of mutual hatred and absolute distrust, the two countries, though slowly and looking back at Moscow, are moving in the direction of settlement.

Armenians in Armenia and the diaspora, as if suddenly, understood that after the collapse of the USSR Turkey's influence in the South Caucasus had been permanently rising, and now to promote its interests in this sensitive region Russia has to think not about confronting but possibly collaborating with Turkey and an Azerbaijan that is pinning its hopes on Turkey. Having recently strengthened its political and military ties with Armenia – its only ally in South Caucasus, Russia does not want to lose Azerbaijan and is looking for new ways of deepening collaboration with it. Official Ankara understands that in the current atmosphere of global tension Russia has no intention to confront it and is making even bolder steps to further its integration with Azerbaijan and to cross to the Central Asia through South Caucasus within the frames of its long cherished and unconcealed strategic program of Great Turan.

The first of two novelties here is that the leaders of the Turkic world seem to have convinced the Russian political elite that pan-Turkic integration is not hostile to Russia. On the contrary, the East Slavonic

and Turkic elements may go in parallel in the Eurasian integration process, cooperate and even intertwine. At this stage it is acceptable to Russia since in developing the process of (currently only economic) Eurasian integration, it is attempting to become the moving force for post-Soviet countries.

The second novelty is that after the Soviet collapse the intellectual segment of the political elite, together with leading scholars and experts, are cautiously trying to find a new modus operandi and positions in this new reality so that they will not lose and be targeted. They started wondering in Armenia what will the process of Armenian-Azerbaijani and Armenian-Turkish settlement look like in consideration of the fact that the big neighbors in the region are obviously interested in it.

The Language of Preconditions In the Dialogue between Armenia and Turkey

As we know, after the collapse of the Soviet Union Turkey recognized the independence of Armenia but refused to establish diplomatic relations. Moreover, since the spring of 1993 it even closed the highway and railway between the latter two countries. To protect Azerbaijan during the past 30 years, Turkey has taken many hostile steps (excepting military ones) against Armenia. Two preliminary conditions set by it for establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia have been insisted on for decades. The first was to abandon pursuing the recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide on the international level and the second was to recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and to withdraw Armenian forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

It is worth recalling in this regard the endeavors to push forward the process of Armenian-Turkish settlement under the sponsorship of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Armenian diplomacy then, like in the past, was fighting for establishing official relations without any preconditions. Armenian diplomats relate that just at the moment of signing the two Zurich Protocols based on the compromise finally achieved during intense negotiations in Switzerland, the Turks raised the demand from Armenia for concessions provided by the Madrid principles in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. When Armenian Foreign Secretary Eduard Nalbandyan rejected this, Mrs. Clinton took him by the hand and brought him to the hall where both parties signed the Protocols. Then, despite the urges of the Western diplomats, Turkey's Parliament refused to ratify the Zurich Protocols in order not to enrage its Azerbaijani brother. Thus the attempt to settle relations without preconditions failed.

Currently, after the essential change of situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Turkey has again turned to the language of preconditions. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared that Turkey will settle its relations with Armenia if Armenia abandons the issue of genocide recognition, understanding well that it would bring about discord between Armenians in Armenia and in the diaspora. Fervent about its huge support of Azerbaijan's victory in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone, Turkey wants to finally divide and isolate Armenia and leave it helpless in the face of the strengthening Turkish-Azerbaijani tandem.

A few days ago, spokesperson of the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry Maria Zakharova said that official Moscow is ready to mediate in the issue of establishing diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia. However, it is not clear whether there will be other co-sponsors – i.e., the US and France. Hadn't France and Russia co-sponsored the negotiations of 2009-

2010 held in Switzerland under the lead of US Secretary of State Clinton? It seems American Armenians can ask their government to display more initiative in this question and help Armenia to get an agreement that wouldn't divide the Armenian people and wouldn't deepen the regional instability which may endanger the Armenian boundaries and sovereignty.

We are ardently waiting for the time when Turkey and Armenians all over the world start discussing settling their relations. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has recently declared that Armenia is ready to start such a dialogue with Turkey. But a question arises for many of us: what does the word "ready" mean? Wouldn't the ongoing process seriously weaken the Armenians all over the world and deepen the controversies between the active groups in diaspora and the new authorities of Armenia? Anyway, it is a question of such importance and relating to the very foundations of Armenian national ideology that it would be appropriate if the newly elected Armenian authorities held a public discussion on it within the country and at the same time within the diaspora and, why not, called an advisory referendum, say, next year.

The OSCE Minsk Group Must Resume Its Work

Enthusiastic about its success in the war, Azerbaijan does not want the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group to resume its regular work. As per official declarations from Baku upon signing the peace treaty with Armenia, there is no sense in continuing the works of the OSCE Minsk Group. At the same time, relying on the multilateral assistance of Turkey, the Azerbaijanis think of the possibility of driving out the Russian peace keepers from Nagorno Karabakh with a clear purpose of isolating the Armenians of Artsakh and taking over the self-proclaimed republic, whether with or without Armenians. If someone tries to convince the OSCE high ranking officers that there will never be a forced displacement of Armenians, we would like to remind them of the expulsion of 400 thousand Armenians in 1988-1991 from Soviet Azerbaijan. So let them not tell us that the Soviet Azerbaijanis were different, and they have changed since then.

If the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is recognized, then according to the fundamental principles of the civilized world, the OSCE must fully recognize the right of Artsakh's self-determination. Armenians need to urge the governments of the US and France to unconditionally resume the OSCE Minsk Group process. Russia is Armenia's ally and will possibly implement its alliance commitments concerning the defense of Armenia's sovereignty, security and stability. But resumption of the OSCE Minsk Group process with the participation of the US and France is the only guarantee of the right of Artsakh Armenians to live and to preserve statehood in their homeland.

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